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Sites of Mediation

*Connected Histories of Places, Processes,
and Objects in Europe and Beyond,
1450–1650*

Edited by

Susanna Burghartz
Lucas Burkart
Christine Göttler



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Acknowledgements

The idea for the present volume emerged from the interdisciplinary doctorate programme *Sites of Mediation: Entangled Histories of Europe, 1450–1650*, which was directed by the three editors and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation between 2012 and 2016. The accompanying discussions during these years between Basel and Bern and between art history and history made our shared work across disciplinary boundaries, conceptual approaches and methodological preferences an extraordinarily stimulating and rewarding experience for all of us.

We are indebted to the Swiss National Science Foundation for generously financing the project. This support allowed the doctoral candidates to research and write their dissertations in an inspiring, interdisciplinary and collaborative research environment and to discuss their findings with international experts in their fields of expertise. Since then, several of them have successfully proceeded to postdoctoral appointments.

The research project was accompanied by a series of workshops, conferences and lectures as well as by study trips to Antwerp and Venice. First results were presented in several panels at the sixtieth annual meeting of The Renaissance Society of America in New York in March 2014. The conversations, contacts and exchanges that occurred during these and other events have been enormously valuable for shaping both the doctoral projects and the development of the reflections and results presented here. We would like to express our thanks to the many colleagues and friends who generously shared their knowledge and insights with us: Renata Ago, Birgitt Borkopp-Restle, Celeste Brusati, Harold Cook, Karolien De Clippel, Jörg Dünne, Sven Dupré, Teresa Esposito, Emine Fetvacı, Dagmar Freist, Mary Fuller, Serge Gruzinski, Dirk Imhof, John Jordan, Heinrich Lang, Elaine Leong, José Ramón Marcaida, Gesa Mackenthun, Luca Molà, Suzanne Preston Blier, Lawrence M. Principe, Marlise Rijks, Lyndal Roper, Ulinka Rublack, Rose Marie San Juan, Gabi Julia Schopf, Kim Siebenhüner, Eric Jan Sluijter, Jessica A. Stevenson Stewart, Koenraad Van Cleempoel, Filip Vermeulen, Tristan Weddigen, Bronwen Wilson, and Joanna Woodall.

Aside from the contributions by our doctoral candidates, the volume contains five additional chapters by Tina Asmussen, Nadia Baadj, Daniela Bleichmar, Antonella Romano, and Claudia Swan. We are extremely grateful to these authors for their creative inputs and extraordinary commitment to the project. Special thanks go to Tina Asmussen and Maike Christadler, the two academic coordinators of the doctorate programme. They were admirably

attentive both to the many administrative tasks and to the intricacies of collaborative research projects. They contributed significantly to creating a pleasurable and stimulating intellectual environment and thereby also to the success of the overall enterprise as well as of the individual projects.

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We have understood our work on 'sites of mediation' as an interdisciplinary exploration into early modern concepts and themes in which objects, artefacts, images and gestures and their relational and reciprocal connections and interactions play a significant role. We very much hope that the results of this shared endeavour will encourage further collaboration and debate across disciplinary lines.

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Introduction: 'Sites of Mediation' in Early Modern Europe and Beyond. A Working Perspective

Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, and Christine Göttler

This book explores the dynamic relationships between sites, people, objects, and images. It emerged from several years of collaborative research by historians and art historians with a strong interest in new approaches in social history as well as the history of science and material culture. *Sites of Mediation* investigates interactions, interconnections, and entanglements on both micro and macro levels, and aims to understand the specific dynamics of processes of translocal and transcultural intersection during the first age of globalization in early modern Europe. Both in current everyday and in academic usage, the term 'site' carries multiple meanings, simultaneously evoking a structural or systematic positioning, a sphere of agency, and a space of interaction. 'Site' may refer to a location, place, position, situation, or scene of particular activity, among other things.¹ The diversity of associations and meanings makes 'site' an appropriate concept to account for different and even divergent cultural and societal perspectives. The term 'mediation' also foregrounds relational and dynamic aspects. In postclassical Latin—for example, the writings of Augustine—the word 'mediatio' was used to problematize the mediatory and intercessory role of Christ. In European languages in the late Middle Ages, 'mediation' had multiple possible meanings, including 'agency or action as an intermediary; the state or fact of serving as an intermediate agent, a means of action, or a medium of transmission'.²

Over the past few decades, scholars have increasingly focused on the question of connectivity in history. In the process, conceptually related approaches such as 'connected' (Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Serge Gruzinski), 'crossed' (Michael Werner, Bénédicte Zimmermann), 'entangled' (Sebastian Conrad, Shalini Randeria) or 'braided' history (Natalie Zemon Davis) have stressed particular asymmetries in the circulation of knowledge—in other words, tensions

1 "Site, n. 2", *OED Online*, March 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180472?rskey=Z21O4z&result=2> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

2 "Mediation, n.", *OED Online*, March 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115665?redirectedFrom=Mediation> (accessed: 02.08.2016); Kemmann A., 'Mediation', in Ueding G. (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, 12 vols. (Darmstadt – Tübingen: 2001) vol. 5, 1006–1016, at 1007.

embodied in spatial relations.³ While ‘trading zones’ (Peter Gallison) direct attention to the associated forms of exchange and encounter, ‘contact zones’ (Marie Louise Pratt) especially emphasize the asymmetries inherent in such relationships.⁴ Thus history may be approached through its direct and indirect entanglements and relationship chains, which exhibit differing intensities and scopes. They encompass local encounters as well as global relationships and allow us to see that the two are interrelated. In this way, connectivity in history sheds light equally on the circulation of persons, concepts, knowledge, and goods and explores them in concrete spatial contexts.

Linking global history with the history of material culture, recent research has highlighted the specific potential of objects, artefacts, and things to bring into contact, engage, and connect people, cultures, and imaginaries previously separated, both spatially and temporally. Studies in history and art history have explored the potential of objects and artefacts to visualize and foster cultural and transcultural entanglements. Objects may thus be understood to act as ‘silent messengers’ and ‘mediators’ at the intersection of micro and macro histories of the local and global worlds.⁵ They are considered here as both ‘indicators’ and ‘catalysts’ of changing epistemic, affective, and aesthetic

3 Subrahmanyam S., “Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia”, *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997) 735–762; Subrahmanyam S., *Explorations in Connected History: From the Tagus to the Ganges* (Oxford: 2004); Subrahmanyam S., *Explorations in Connected History: Mughals and Franks* (Oxford: 2005); Gruzinski S., *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York, NY: 2002); Gruzinski S., *Les quatre parties du monde: Histoire d'une mondialisation* (Paris: 2004); Werner M. – Zimmermann B., “Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity”, *History and Theory* 45 (2006) 30–50; Randeria C.S., *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: 2002); Davis N.Z., “Beyond Babel: Multiple Tongues and National Identities in Rabelais and His Critics”, in Davis N.Z. – Hampton T., (eds.), *Confronting the Turkish Dogs: A Conversation on Rabelais and His Critics* (Berkeley, CA: 1998) 15–28.

4 Gallison P., *Image & Logic: A Material Culture of Microphysics* (Chicago, IL: 1997); Pratt M.L., “Arts of the Contact Zone”, *Profession* 91 (1991) 33–40; Pratt M.L., *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: 1992).

5 Dupré S. – Lüthy C., “Introduction: Silent Messengers. The World of Goods and the Circulation of Knowledge in the Early Modern Netherlands”, in Dupré S. – Lüthy C. (eds.), *Silent Messengers: The Circulation of Material Objects of Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Berlin: 2011) 1–12. For the challenge of integrating micro and macro histories as well as the local and the global see also Roberts L., “Situating Science in Global History: Local Exchanges and Networks of Circulation”, *Itinerario* 33 (2009) 9–30.

practices.⁶ As ‘agents and mediators’, objects connect not only synchronically between different cultural contexts, but also diachronically between different historical periods and pasts.⁷ Most recently, the role of the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) has been described as one of mediation in the circulation of objects, artefacts, and technologies across the globe.⁸ Moving these discussions forward, *Sites of Mediation* aims to stress the processual dimensions of constellations that until recently have been discussed primarily in spatial terms.

‘Sites of Mediation’: A Working Perspective?

Discussions in cultural studies and the social sciences have opened up new ways of thinking about the entanglements and relational processes that are the focus of interest for the *Sites of Mediation* project.⁹ Thus, theories of the social that seek to grasp intersection and entanglement in new ways, by incorporating things or objects into theory building as constitutive elements, have gained increasing importance. Bruno Latour has introduced things as actors into social analysis.¹⁰ Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot have sought to reconceptualize the ‘relationship between person-states and thing-states’, and have developed the ‘situation’ as a key term in place of society.¹¹ Andreas Reckwitz has proposed a ‘praxeological perspective on the social’ that integrates emotions and

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- 6 We borrow the term from Rijks M., *Catalysts of Knowledge: Artists’ and Artisans’ Collections in Early Modern Antwerp*, Ph.D. dissertation (Ghent University: 2016). Our sincere thanks to Marlies Rijks for giving us access to her unpublished Ph.D. dissertation.
 - 7 Gerritsen A. – Riello G., “Introduction”, in Gerritsen A. – Riello G. (eds.), *Writing Material Culture History* (London: 2015) 1–13, at 3.
 - 8 DaCosta Kaufmann T. – North M., “Introduction: Mediating Cultures”, in DaCosta Kaufmann T. – North M., *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture* (Amsterdam: 2014) 9–23.
 - 9 See, for example, Bedos-Rezak B.M., “Meditation on Mediation”, *NCCR Mediality Newsletter* 14 (2015) 3–9, at 3.
 - 10 Latour B., *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: 2005).
 - 11 Boltanski L. – Thévenot L., *On Justification: Economies of Worth*, trans. C. Porter (Princeton, NJ: 2006); Boltanski L., *Soziologie und Sozialkritik: Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen 2008* (Berlin: 2010); Diaz-Bone R. – Salais R. (eds.), “The *Économie des conventions*: Transdisciplinary Discussions and Perspectives”, *Historical Social Research* 37 (2012) 9–94; Ziemann A. (ed.), *Offene Ordnung? Philosophie und Soziologie der Situation* (Wiesbaden: 2013); Neu T., “Koordination und Kalkül: Die *Économie des conventions* und die Geschichtswissenschaft”, *Historische Anthropologie* 23 (2015) 129–147.

affects as well as artefacts and space ‘as basic components of sociality’.¹² He argues for a new ‘interobjectivity’, stating that ‘the social is both evolving and reproducing within networks between humans and objects that allow for the emergence of practices’. He thus highlights the importance of artefacts for the new conceptualization of a sociality that ‘encompasses human as well as non-human entities’.¹³

Several studies in sociology, cultural theory, media theory, art history, and image science (*Bildwissenschaft*) have emphasized processes of interaction, transmission, and transformation. In his ground-breaking reflections on mediology since the 1990s, the media and cultural studies scholar Régis Debray has introduced the term ‘mediation’ to point to the ‘double body of the medium’, which is ‘neither a thing nor a countable category of objects’.¹⁴ Debray understands the medium instead as a ‘place and a function in a vehicular dispositive of diffusion’ and mediation as a process of transmission in time.¹⁵ This allows him to interpret seemingly disparate phenomena such as technology and culture as related, and to trace ‘ways and means of symbolic efficacy’ by inquiring into processes, materials, and instruments, thereby locating the operation of the abstract in the concrete.¹⁶ In recalibrating the conceptual pair that is communication and mediation, Debray is concerned with not having to play society and history, and thus spatial intersection and temporal continuity, against one another. Birgit Mersmann has gone on to make use of Debray’s mediological concept of transmission with its four Ms (message, medium, milieu, and mediation) to understand what she calls ‘visual transculturality’ or the ‘global traffic of images’.¹⁷ Her distinction between technical and organic dispositives and her thoughts about the circulation of images across different cultures and media, as well as across real, imaginary, and fictional realms, point to a range of analytical perspectives. These include questions of apparatus and

12 Reckwitz A., “Affective Spaces: A Praxeological Outlook”, *Rethinking History* 16 (2012) 241–258, at 242.

13 Reckwitz, “Affective Spaces” 251–252.

14 Debray R., *Introduction à la médiologie* (Paris: 2000) 148. On Debray, see Vandenberghe F., “Régis Debray and Mediation Studies: Or How Does an Idea Become a Material Force”, *Thesis Eleven* 89 (2007) 23–42; Debray R., “What is Mediology?”, *Le Monde Diplomatique* 32 (1999) trans. M. Irvine, http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Debray-What_is_Mediology.html (accessed: 02.08.2016).

15 Debray, *Introduction* 149.

16 Debray, *Introduction* 129.

17 Mersmann B., “(Fern-)Verkehr der Bilder: Mediologie als methodischer Brückenschlag zwischen Bild- und Übersetzungswissenschaft”, in Mersmann B. – Weber T. (eds.), *Mediologie als Methode* (Berlin: 2008) 149–167.

technical skill, cultural memory, instances and institutions of communication and mediation, image practices, image rituals, and symbolic form, as well as texture, surface, and appearance.

Throughout the past decades, these reconceptualizations of the social as well as reflections in mediology or image studies have led to a blurring of borders and the expansion of such central and contested categories as knowledge and identity. With *Sites of Mediation* we have tried to extend this fascinating work on questions of interactions between human beings and things, objects, and materials in a concrete way.

Concepts, Methods, Perspectives

Within the context of this book, 'sites of mediation' have been explored and conceptualized as sites of collection and accumulation, sites of transformation and translation, sites or realms of ambiguity and representation, and sites of material imagination and interests, among others. In concrete terms, certain places and their potential for specific forms of exchange play an important role in determining which connections can be made. This is true of the market as an abstract guarantor of exchange, but also as a very concrete site where goods such as fish are bought and sold. Skilful depictions of such markets also underline the extent to which specific knowledge assumes material form in commodities and their representations in art, which are themselves marketed both locally and internationally. Painted and printed images of markets and other sites of exchange not only visualize but also conceptualize and commodify mercantile, artisanal, and natural knowledge. Similarly, pictures also give access to places where economic relationships and political encounters can be imagined. Within the framework of familiar narratives such as the Old Testament, the depiction of encounters between rulers and of gift exchange function as actualizations in time and space and help to stabilize entangled relationships. Depictions of markets and gift exchange thus lent tangible form to the interconnectedness between economy, politics, and knowledge.

In addition, in the early modern period, there were a number of sites both inside and outside the city gates that proved to be especially suited for acting out social relations. Indeed, they may be considered veritable sites of production for the portrayal of complex social entanglements. As an (interior) space aimed at urban self-presentation and group representation, the Basel Schützenhaus, for example, extended its reach well beyond the local. The same applies to aristocratic or courtly staterooms with their translocal aspirations and networks of relationships and to certain performative events such as Joyous Entries.

'Sites of mediation' also function as sites of material transformation and the acquisition of natural or technological knowledge. This becomes clear in the instance of a banquet hall with its own kitchen that could serve both to transform and preserve initially ephemeral products intended for consumption and which, during what was often an experimental cooking process, also allowed for the local to intersect with the exotic or global. Another typical site of experimentation with new and unexpected connections was the laboratory so central to early modern knowledge production that, within the context of this book, also pops up in wholly unexpected locales such as the Arctic ice pack.

Sites of Mediation accordingly directs our attention to an entire series of spatial constellations that allow for or facilitate relationships, linkages, and transformations in various ways. The ways in which these spaces were furnished and dramatized had a direct impact on the ways in which they affected people. In addition, the movements between these spaces and sites generated specific forms and possibilities of relating to people and institutions. Thus, for example, the broad network of state officials in the Venetian *stato da mar* constituted a multiple and 'super-spatial' site where diplomatic encounters between Venetian and Ottoman officials could be enacted performatively in political constellations. In this regard, the series of the Joyous Entries staged in Antwerp in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are of particular interest in that these acts of civic and urban self-assertion took place in a condensed time period of only a few hours.

In addition to sites and spaces, other concepts for the study of relationships have been taken into consideration. In several chapters, (relationship) figures that are capable of structuring 'thought spaces' (or *Denkräume*, as Aby Warburg has called them) play an important role by offering possibilities for order and making boundary violations conceivable.¹⁸ Processes of imagination are key to the creation of such intermediary or imaginary spaces of reflection, reasoning, and contemplation and are essential for social processes and for building and maintaining relationships. This becomes paradigmatically clear in the early modern discourse on hermaphrodites, which articulates contemporary scientific concepts of gender while embodying societal desires for order and processing imaginary fantasies and fears. The imaginary dimension of such ideas also becomes apparent in the figure of the chimera. This composite creature allowed early modern culture to formulate its own specific needs for complexity and parataxis by resorting to the physical realities and imaginary inventories of classical antiquity, in this way attaining through (dis)association

18 Cf. Trembl M. (ed.), *Warburgs Denkraum: Formen, Motive, Materialien* (Munich: 2014).

an openness to non-linear processes. The global circulation of materials, artefacts, styles, and values expanded and also destabilized the field of visual and material competence and unsettled traditional notions of craftsmanship and art. The dissemination of composite or fusion figures across various media also challenged and affected interpretative skills.

Alongside sites, spaces, places, and figures, questions of scale, format, and style are essential. It is precisely here that we see the two faces of formal and material aspects, their relational and contextualizing verve as well as their potential for standardization and normalization, delimitation and exclusion. As exemplified by the experiences of early modern travellers such as Francesco Carletti in Goa and other marketplaces of the world, the 'period eye' became increasingly 'global' in that it was exposed to concurring and competing materialities, visualities, and aesthetic values.¹⁹ Vera Keller has recently drawn attention to forms of the 'societal' acquisition of knowledge and argues that in the early modern period groups were often linked by their shared interests in certain objects and practices.²⁰ Such expert groups shared visual and material awareness and discernment; objects were not merely perceived but also handled, explored, and investigated according to their visual appearance and material properties, including size, shape, texture, and weight. Several contributions to *Sites of Mediation* introduce concepts and themes that relate to more formal and material aspects of meaning. These contributions include 'paper pages' that commemorated and re-enacted transitory, but politically crucial, events or connected the early modern world of botany; display furniture such as the cabinet, which brought into play domestic and exotic materials and objects, but also the tension between micro and macro dimensions; or the improvised ship laboratory that permitted an analysis of the Arctic environment in situ and *en miniature*. The explicit inclusion of such questions in the analysis of histories of entanglement and relationship allows for a better understanding of how connections and contexts are created and how assignments and exclusions are undertaken. Thus corresponding surface treatments and textures can affect the beholder, and specific knowledge formats and categories of analysis such as taxonomies and lists of names can present objects

19 Cf. Kobayashi-Sato Y. – Mochizuki M.M., "Perspective and its Discontents or St. Lucy's Eyes", in Leibsohn D. – Favrot Petersen J. (eds.), *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2012) 21–48, at 42–44.

20 Keller V., "The 'Lover' and Early Modern Fandom", *Transformative Works and Cultures* 7 (2011), <http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/351/222> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

and phenomena in a compelling manner, but one that is, above all, suited to exchange.

After all, 'sites of mediation' can also be related to questions of change and transformation. Transformation processes can arise from new or altered synchronic relationships between cultures and groups but also worlds of things and media, as they were made possible through processes of translation, mediation, and amalgamation. The unprecedented resurgence of interest in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is indicative of a much larger preoccupation with natural and artificial production motivated by both natural philosophy and commerce.²¹ The ubiquity of alchemy in the early modern arts, including oil painting, glass-making, sculpting with sugar, and mining and smelting, points to a widespread interest in material (as well as spiritual) conversion and change. Similarly, in early modern mining, certain economic practices both transformed and mediated between nature, precious metals, symbolic values, and their cultural imaginaries. Much like alchemy, processes of translation manipulate natural time. Translations mediate between different epochs; the afterlife of phenomena changes them and our perception of them. This is also evidenced by the multiple lives of the Codex Mendoza. Translations and readings do not merely convey history of Aztec society and culture recorded therein, but also turn individual book pages into 'sites of mediation' in a braided history between the Old and the New World. Questions of permanence and impermanence are significant in helping to shape the possibilities of specific interactions. In this way, they draw our attention to how locations and processes at work can both create and hinder connections and promote or prevent development and change. This also alerts us to consider intentional interruptions or ruptures and unintentional dissolutions. Part of the history of entanglement and relationships is their finiteness, and connectedness is accompanied by disconnectedness.

Sites of Investigation

Drawing upon our interest in the dynamic relationships between places, processes, and objects, we have chosen specific cities as the starting point for discussions of exchange, contact, and connectivity. We understand the focus on exchange and circulation as the central characteristic of the urban. As hubs

21 On their alliance, see Smith P.M. – Findlen P. (eds.), *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York, NY: 2002); and Margócsy D., *Commercial Visions: Science, Trade, and Visual Culture in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago, IL: 2014).

of processes of exchange between humans, cities linked widely dispersed spaces as well as diverse social spheres, negotiating a broad range of knowledge and goods.²² At the intersection of political, social, economic, and material history as well as the history of knowledge, 'world cities' have proved to be of major analytical interest as melting pots of different cultures of foreign merchants and artisans, who linked the city to other parts of the globe.²³ As sites of exchange and accumulation, they are internally structured by complex layers of relationships that connect them at the same moment with trans-localities in various ways. In the process, however, questions of tensions, negotiation processes, and asymmetrical relations become increasingly central; they have been identified as a distinguishing feature of 'contact zones' and are also understood to characterize circulation and exchange more generally.

Understanding the fabric of a city as a function of a pattern of internal and external relationships is fruitful regardless of how large or small the city is. Thus the notion of 'world cities' can also refer to smaller cities with less global presence and can also be further differentiated as a concept. This opens up a mode of conceptual access that pays adequate attention to site specificity by tying the interest in objects, the circulation of goods, and the transfer of knowledge back to the conditions from which they emerged. Cities are inserted into global networks without entirely growing beyond a local setting. 'Sites of mediation' have their own site specificities in that they respond to, engage with, and reinterpret specific physical sites, by either visualizing the traces of their past history or inscribing them into a larger translocal and transnational framework.²⁴

As sites of investigation, we have chosen a variety of European cities including Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, Basel, Rome, and Venice. These cities differ in their geographic location, (demographic) size, internal structure, global functions and reach, types of networks, and also their ambitions. Participating in a world imagined as universal, they all operated on different levels of global and interregional connections.

22 For the role of artisans and guilds in the shaping of 'urban agency', see Munck B. De, "Disassembling the City: A Historical and an Epistemological View on the Agency of the Cities", *Journal of Urban History* 42 (2016) 1–9.

23 Romano A. – Damme S. Van, "Science and World Cities: Thinking Urban Knowledge and Science at Large (16th–18th century)", *Itinerario* 33 (2009) 79–95.

24 There is a rich and growing literature on site specificity, see Kwon M., *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: 2002); and Gamboni D., "The Museum as a Work of Art: Site Specificity and Extended Agency", *Kritische Berichte* 33 (2005) 16–27.

No other city in early modern Europe made such extensive claims to validity as did Rome. In the tradition of the Roman Empire, Rome regarded itself as the *caput mundi*; even today, as the centre of the Catholic Church, its head bestows his blessing *urbi et orbi*, that is, upon the city and the entire globe. As universal as these two notions are, the claim associated with them towards the global entanglements and relationships of the early modern period is still largely undetermined. As the heart of Catholic Christendom and a princely court, however, Rome as a city also participated in the growing connectivity of the first age of globalization. Papal Rome was closely linked with the world through its global mission, which was pursued both by the curia and the various orders, especially the Dominicans and Franciscans and later the Jesuits. This brought goods, artefacts, and knowledge from the entire world to the Tiber, where a first-rate artistic centre and sites of conspicuous consumption emerged at the papal court and the cardinals' households. In Rome, which saw itself as a 'world city', the indeterminacy of universal claims to power thus became transformed during the early modern era into concrete relationships and entanglements of a sometimes global scope.

Venice owed its prosperity and reputation to its historical connectivity. The connections between the Venetian Republic and the Levant have been well known to scholars for quite some time. Nevertheless, their interpretation was long beholden to a dichotomous narrative that continued to make a sharp distinction between Venice and the East, opposing the Christian, European, and humanist West to the Islamic, Oriental, and 'barbarian' East.²⁵ In contrast, more recent research has stressed the city's role as both one of the most important Renaissance marketplaces for goods, commodities, and treasured objects and a terminal for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and skills that mutually connected the East and the West. Following such an understanding of the city's site specificity, the chapters on Venice as a 'site of mediation' explicitly focus on processes and practices of exchange between Venetian citizens and inhabitants as well as institutions in Constantinople. Assuming the perspective of a shared or entangled history, they highlight the shared experiences, expectations, and narratives, as well as the underlying imaginaries, that simultaneously shaped and represented these relations, analysing these contacts in a far more complex way than a dichotomous model could.

25 Höfert A., *Den Feind beschreiben: 'Türkengefahr' und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600* (Frankfurt am Main – New York, NY: 2003); Bisaha N., *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia, PA: 2004); Meserve M., *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: 2008).

In the early modern period, Basel was by far the smallest of the major cities under consideration. As a conciliar city, it has been praised for its European impact, especially in the fields of humanism and print culture. With the establishment of Erasmus in Basel, the city's identity as a 'world city' in the international republic of letters was reinforced. However, its accession to the Swiss Confederation and the implementation of the Reformation led to a provincialization and marginalization of the city while still connecting it to a growing international network. At the same moment the municipal bank of Basel (*Stadtwechsel*) became an important centre of international finance and continued to be so, linking the local with two of the most powerful monarchies of the time—France and the Habsburgs. Located at the intersection between southern and northern Europe, Basel maintained its international reputation during the second half of the sixteenth century thanks to the university. Its early civic collections of artefacts, books, and scholarly letters are equally renowned. Nevertheless, new approaches in the history of science, transcultural history, material culture, representation, and sociability have yet to be applied to this material. Moving beyond the traditional pathways of intellectual history, the chapters on Basel take into account these approaches and new perspectives in order to tell an 'entangled history of the local'.

Despite the fact that new research on early modern Antwerp and Amsterdam has drawn much inspiration from work in the history of science, art, material culture, and economics, the 'golden age' of Antwerp is still frequently portrayed as a preface to that of Amsterdam. Moreover, the complex (and contested) roles of material objects and artworks in the formation and staging of national and cosmopolitan identities still remain largely unexplored. Rather than follow the well-known teleological explanations offered by history and art history, the chapters on Antwerp, Amsterdam, and the 'Netherlandish' presence at the English court emphasize the multiple entanglements and intersections of people, artefacts, natural objects, and raw materials in the early modern period in an attempt to redefine the terms in which artworks and precious objects were viewed and understood. In Antwerp, with its long tradition of luxury trades, the global flows of precious commodities and goods also brought about a specific 'eye' or 'sense' for virtuoso craftsmanship in the arts. Antwerp and, later, Amsterdam self-consciously presented themselves and were viewed by others as cities connected with markets and cities of the whole world in which claims of 'newness'—in regard to goods, information, and knowledge as well as craftsmanship and art—occupied a central place.

As an additional site intimately related to and yet fundamentally different from the others, we have added 'the sea' as a geographical and imaginary space of encounter and contact. Such an approach enables us to engage with various

research perspectives in maritime studies including the history of knowledge, media, objects, materials, and the body.

Sites of Mediation brings together fourteen chapters by historians, art historians, and historians of science organized around three overarching sets of questions and themes.

The five chapters assembled in Section 1 ('Staging Encounters') address a series of encounters staged to negotiate social, cultural, or religious identities within specific—in most cases highly charged—urban spaces and at moments signalling crises or shifts in the balance of power. The section begins with Antonella Romano's chapter on Rome—the very centre of the Christian world, which is here, however, approached from a layered and decentred perspective. Contrary to general views of post-Tridentine Rome as oriented towards the (Christian) past, Romano foregrounds the city's global ambitions and the types of knowledge and expertise required to fulfil these claims. With its many religious congregations, foreign communities, political factions, and the flows of visitors moving in and out of the eternal city, Rome had always been a global or 'world-city'. The programs of urban renewal initiated by the post-Tridentine popes were also meant to showcase and reassess the city's distinctive role as a 'site of mediation' on an increasingly global scale. This chapter focuses on the period of the 1580s when papal and Spanish ambitions combined to launch a program of colonialization that would re-establish Rome's crucial role in a knowledge network that reached across the known world. The visit of four young Japanese men to Rome in 1585 marked perhaps the most spectacular moment of display of Rome's global connectivity. As Romano shows, the knowledge produced by this deeply asymmetrical encounter was embodied in a rich array of printed material both visual and textual, learned and ephemeral, that travelled across the Christian world.

In the early modern European perception, sixteenth-century Antwerp was the very model of a cosmopolitan city. As Ivo Raband argues, it was the continuous presence of foreign merchant communities who, in the course of the century, transformed the Flemish city into a globally connected 'site of mediation' and subsequently contributed to reinforcing its position as a major centre of luxury trades. The centrepiece of Raband's chapter is the triumphal arch erected by the Genoese merchants for the Joyous Entry of Archduke Ernest of Austria (1553–1595) into Antwerp in the summer of 1594. Building upon recent innovative research on Antwerp's commercial and artisanal culture, Raband uses this triumphal arch to investigate the ways in which these foreign merchants performed their role as major players in the market for precious commodities. The ephemeral construction was elaborately decorated to convey multilayered meanings; thus it serves as an especially appropriate

example for discussing the intersections of local and global history, mercantile interests, and the arts at a crucial moment in the history of the city.

Concentrating on the late fifteenth century, Benedikt Bego-Ghina investigates the ways in which different types of knowledge came together during the encounter between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. After the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire was seen as a threat by most of Latin Christendom, especially Venice. Still, the Republic was linked in numerous ways to the empire and there was a lively exchange across borders by diplomats, merchants, sailors, and artists. Venetians residing far from the lagoon remained in contact with their hometown through letters and reports. Beyond the exchange of information, Bego-Ghina argues, these writings were deliberately used to showcase their authors as exemplary citizens of the Serenissima. As 'sites of mediation' these reports fused lore, popular opinions, and traditional views about the Turks with direct knowledge gained from the encounter with Ottoman officials. For the Venetians, the Levant and its inhabitants served as a stage to convincingly locate their own actions and prove themselves worthy of their self-proclaimed duties towards their audience in Venice.

In his chapter on 'shared visions' in sixteenth-century Venice, Nicolai Kölmel argues that the diversity characterizing the city's appearance was a constitutive part of its identity. In contrast to many travellers' impressions, this diversity was not experienced as odd or evil 'otherness' but, rather, as what could be termed 'known strangeness'. However, as a region not entirely accessible and a culture with a different faith, and with different habits and laws, the Levant also remained a space of ambiguities. Introducing the concepts of 'shared conceptions' and 'spheres of the imagined' Kölmel shows how the idea of Venice as a 'marketplace of the world' and perceptions of the Mediterranean as a sphere of the *inconnu* came together. By analysing a selection of works made for the Venetian financial administrations in the Palazzo di Camerlenghi, he argues that these paintings acculturated spheres of the East in the Venetians' self-perception and thus shaped and reflected their 'shared visions' of an imagined East.

In Switzerland the production of small-scale stained glass developed as a 'national' art and flourished especially between 1530 and 1630.²⁶ In his chapter on the Schützenhaus, the local headquarters of the shooters in Basel, Michael Schaffner argues that this particular medium provided a space of negotiation

26 Giesicke B. – Ruoss M., "In Honour of Friendship: Function, Meaning, and Iconography in Civic Stained-Glass Donations in Switzerland and Southern Germany", in Butts B. (ed.), *Painting on Light: Drawings and Stained Glass in the Age of Dürer and Holbein*, exh. cat., The J. Paul Getty Museum in collaboration with The Saint Louis Art Museum (Los Angeles, CA: 2000) 43–55, at 44.

for urban, regional, and interregional encounters. Situated close to the city walls, but outside them, the Schützenhaus was in many respects an in-between space where people of different social, political, and confessional backgrounds met and interacted. As a centre of the military identity of Basel as a city state, the Schützenhaus allowed equally for the demonstration of the city's military strength and the 'brotherhood in arms' of the burghers as well as of its simultaneous rivalry and fraternity with the other cantons of the Swiss Confederation, their burghers, both Protestant and Catholic, and the translocal aristocracy. A close examination of a spectacular sample of the stained-glass paintings commissioned by three members of the noble Catholic family Schenck zu Schweinsberg from Hesse reveals that the Schützenhaus functioned as a site where the male community of early modern Basel simultaneously orchestrated its own entanglements and boundaries.

The five chapters of Section II ('Translation, Transmission, Transformation') address materiality and its transformations through different processes of appropriation and attribution. This section examines the conversion and transposition of objects between cultures, the interaction of actors from various sites and milieus as well as the processes of translation between languages, media, and materials. Tina Asmussen discusses the interaction between human actors and metallic materials in sixteenth-century German mining regions. At this time mining was a major economic activity in the area, which in turn had significant effects on the material culture of central Europe and its perceptions of metallic ores and the values attached to them. Asmussen utilizes the conflated notions of gold and silver, both as symbols and generators of value, as a starting point to analyse discourses on abundance and shortage as well as negotiations of price and value, specifically highlighting the case of shared investment. Paper securities called 'Kux' appeared in Saxony at the end of the fifteenth century. In these objects the cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions of human practices and mineral resources converged. The chapter argues that the materials in question—paper, gold, silver, copper, and iron—rather than stable or fixed entities, functioned simultaneously as economic resources, scientific objects or substances, raw materials, and powerful allegories as well as phantasms or images of value. It pays particular attention to the transformations and valuation of metals in order to tell a story not only about the accumulation and circulation of goods, but also about economic projections, desires, and effects.

The following chapter investigates a courtly space of experimentation. According to Jennifer Rabe, the so-called *Dutch Pranketing Room* at Tart Hall was used by Aletheia Howard, Countess of Arundel, for cooking and experiments as well as for impressive dinner parties. The countess used large amounts of sugar to create intricate imitations of meat and vegetables that

astonished, entertained, and delighted her guests. Rabe suggests that Lady Arundel's banquets connected a national culinary tradition, as documented in recipe books of the time, with the new possibilities that became available thanks to the emerging global trade. In addition, the banquets also played with an incongruity between sight and taste. This mediating role can be compared to that performed by the artists the Countess employed. Tart Hall provides valuable insights into the world of the widely travelled collector and patron of artists like Van Dyck and Rubens. In this sense, the Countess's *Pranketing Room* is explored as a 'site of mediation' between alimentary and painterly experiments.

The creation of herbaria as an important knowledge-making practice arose in mid-sixteenth-century Italy, as a consequence of botany's rise to the most innovative branch of natural history. The so-called technique of *hortus siccus* or *hortus hyemalis* spread quickly to central and western Europe. Davina Benkert presents a close reading of two herbaria from leading scientists in Basel at the end of the sixteenth century. Analysing the *horti sicci* in terms of their specific materiality allows Benkert to contextualize them with regard to Felix Platter's and Caspar Bauhin's other botanical and collecting activities. The expertise and craftsmanship involved in producing a *hortus siccus* provide further evidence of the collectors' connoisseurship and status in a scientific community, making the herbal a 'site of mediation' that links plants, collectors, and spectators. Furthermore, Benkert's comparison between the two herbaria sheds new light on the intersections between different systems of reference and classification.

Daniela Bleichmar analyses the travels of the renowned Codex Mendoza, a pictorial manuscript about Aztec history, culture, religion, and tributary practices produced in Mexico City around 1542, within a larger conceptual framework of early modern translation. Drawing from both Mesoamerican and European bookmaking traditions, the Codex Mendoza was a new kind of colonial object created through various types of translation—from image into word, from Nahuatl into Spanish, from oral narrative into written language, and from indigenous traditions into colonial interpretations. It was set in motion immediately after its creation and continued to move in various ways for centuries. It travelled physically, going from Mexico to Paris, London, and Oxford. It later moved across media, from manuscript to print, as authors included excerpts from it in their publications. It also travelled interpretively, since printed renditions created different versions of the codex based on the selection of pages reproduced, the varying relations articulated between images and text, and the conclusions drawn about Amerindian culture. Mobility, Bleichmar argues, was not an occurrence imposed upon an object that existed as a stable and immutable entity despite its travels, but rather a series of constitutive acts of

translation, selection, and interpretation that produced multiple versions of the object itself.

Nadia Baadj investigates one of the chief luxury export goods in seventeenth-century Antwerp, the multimedia art cabinet, or *kunstkast*, as a microcosm of the diverse production of local craft guilds. These hybrid cabinets cut across a wide range of media and craft specializations, incorporating the materials, techniques, and expertise of painters, engravers, locksmiths, cabinetmakers, ebonists, glassmakers, embroiderers, and silversmiths, among others. The polyvalence of *kunstkasten* extended to their merging of local and foreign elements. The export of Antwerp cabinets throughout Europe and New Spain and their subsequent exchange for valuable raw materials from the New World further contributed to their composite identity. By focusing on the 'chimeric' nature of *kunstkasten* and locating agency and value in their materiality and craftsmanship, this chapter argues that more than static pieces of furniture, they functioned as potent sites that mediated between local and foreign; past and present; ornament and utility; pictorial and plastic arts; and two- and three-dimensional space. It posits that, on an even more microcosmic scale, these cabinets operated similarly to real and painted Antwerp collections by stimulating knowledge, inventiveness, and the cross-fertilization of media, and by bringing into focus the city's hybrid and international community of making, practising, learning, and knowing.

Focusing on the time period of circa 1600, the four chapters assembled in Section III ('Fluid Worlds') reflect on the fluidity of meaning and interpretation; topics and questions addressed include the fabrication of gender identification and the construction of legal, aesthetic, economic, and medical values and norms. Whereas the first chapter highlights the complex and multifaceted processes of reading and interpreting bodies, the remaining three chapters explore the aesthetic and epistemic values and uses as well as the 'law' of the sea as an increasingly contested site of desires, fears, and competing claims.

Using the example of Basel, Sarah-Maria Schober discusses the hermaphrodite as a *Denkfigur* by looking at a series of events and sources concerning the city around 1600. Her argument centres on the intersection of ambiguity and authority. In her analysis she brings together Caspar Bauhin's publications and correspondence on hermaphrodites with negotiations of gender as a social category within a sample of scientific sources such as Felix Platter's *Observationes* and Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum* as well as legal cases from Basel's highest court; she also considers some short literary texts collected by Platter illustrating instances of gender trouble. Looking at these divergent source materials it becomes obvious that the question of gender was not the only dichotomy

challenged by the hermaphrodite. Rather, the example of Basel makes clear to what extent ambiguity was a signature of late sixteenth-century European societies.

There is no doubt that the period around 1600 was marked by extraordinary colonial rivalry and the competition for nautical supremacy. In her chapter on John Davis's *The Worldes Hydrographical Discription* (1595), Franziska Hilfiker investigates how within these historical circumstances specific maritime sites were included in the building of new imaginaries and arsenals of knowledge. In this hydrographic text, detailed descriptions of the experiments Davis conducted during his three arctic expeditions—concerning the salinity and freezing of seawater—engage with more narrative passages recounting the severe 'icy' dangers he had overcome. As this collected geographical data was incorporated into another medium, Emery Molineux's globe, John Davis's work suggested a promising location for further maritime exploration. Indeed, the English exploration of the northwest Arctic Ocean was premised on an imaginary strait (leading from the North Atlantic Ocean directly to the Moluccas), and hence the promise of a valuable new maritime 'hinge' in an emerging global maritime transport system. This chapter suggests a reading of the sea as a site where processes of understanding emerged, and thus argues against a notion of a smooth and frictionless oceanic expanse.

The types of knowledge connected to 'watery realms' are also a central concern of Stefanie Wyssenbach's chapter on the Antwerp painter Frans Snijders's depictions of natural resources, especially fish and other marine species. Her main interest, however, is the history of 'taste'—in its double entendre as an aesthetic and gustatory judgment—and how it overlaps with medical knowledge. Still-life paintings were not only exported but also sold locally in significant quantities and gained in popularity over the course of the seventeenth century. In her chapter, Wyssenbach considers the reasons for the success of and taste for Antwerp still-life paintings within the context of the city's early modern household and material culture. Several of these works offer highly sophisticated commentaries on early seventeenth-century Antwerp and its cultural environment. They were valued because they resonated with the city's maritime and medical knowledge. They also catered to an urban, educated audience with a specific taste and appreciation for the glistening, gleaming surfaces of the medium of oil painting.

This book begins with Rome as the hub of globalization of Catholic culture and it ends with the vast and unpredictable open sea, which had long become a site of conflicts and competing claims—an arena where European vessels alternately dominated and were subjugated. In her chapter on the changing

fortunes of the Florentine merchant and adventurer Francesco Carletti (1573–1636), Claudia Swan portrays the image of a sea—its dangers arising from competition between various European fleets as much as from natural disasters. The time frame in which Carletti’s story unfolds coincides with the years when the Dutch forcefully began to insert themselves into the lucrative Asian trading network created by the Portuguese. Carletti, who had lived more than two years in Goa—which he described as a merchants’ paradise still controlled by the Portuguese despite the increasing influence of the Dutch—departed on a Portuguese vessel destined for Lisbon on Christmas morning of 1601. When his ship was captured by the Dutch only two and a half months later, the precious goods he had taken with him served as bargaining chips that would save his life. But this was not the final destiny of Carletti’s possessions: they subsequently became legally acquired booty and then diplomatic gifts. In Swan’s account the brief encounter between the Dutch and the Portuguese vessels, and the lawsuit that continued for three years, functioned as two interrelated ‘sites of mediation’ or spaces in which processes of reinterpretation, transformation, and translation took place.

As Carletti himself mentioned, the only pieces he retained from his initial possessions were two small paintings on copper made ‘by good artists in Japan’, representing a crucified Christ and an *Ecce Homo*, and which also saved the life of his Korean servant on that fateful day. As a product of the mediation of different artists’ cultures, these devotional artefacts exercised their agency in yet another cultural context. They memorialized Carletti and his servant’s exchange of their possessions for their lives. Moreover, they are emblematic of a shifting and decisive moment in early modern European world and culture—that is the subject of this book.

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PART 1

Staging Encounters



Rome and its Indies: A Global System of Knowledge at the End of the Sixteenth Century

Antonella Romano

Over the last few decades, a renewed interest in urban history has been fostered by both the cultural and spatial turns, so that the terminology related to urban space—cities, places, sites—as well as the epistemological dimension of the analysis of space have had a profound impact on the pursuit of empirical investigations.¹ At the same time, the new history of science—which emphasizes agency, circulations, and connections as well as networks and trajectories of objects, individuals, or social groups—has focused on ‘world-cities’ as hubs and sites of global connections. The more recent success of global history, along with its claim that a global scale is the most relevant method of observation, has contributed to the marginalization of the study of cities or, in other words, the dissolution of the ‘local’ into the ‘urban’. Thus, we are currently faced with different research agendas and methodological possibilities that invite us to rethink and further develop the idea of ‘sites of mediation’ and its efficacy in investigating the ‘interactions, interconnections, and entanglements on both the micro and macro levels’, in order ‘to understand the specific dynamics of processes of translocal and transcultural intersection during the first age of globalization in early modern Europe.’²

Based on an empirical body of research related to Renaissance Rome,³ this chapter considers its profile and function as a Renaissance world city, while

1 My participation in the ‘Sites of Mediation’ programme represents one of the many opportunities I have been given to disseminate, discuss, and hopefully improve my work. I am, thus, particularly grateful to Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, and Christine Göttler, as well as to the students I met and engaged with. I am also grateful to the other participants in these enriching debates, especially Stéphane Van Damme for his inspiring books, particularly *Métropoles de papier: Naissance de l’archéologie urbaine à Paris et à Londres* (Paris: 2012). The historiographical framework of my paper is analysed in the various publications mentioned below.

2 See the introduction to this volume.

3 This paper is the follow-up of a research programme I directed between 2000 and 2005, at the École française de Rome, whose major conclusions can be consulted in Romano A. (ed.), *Rome et la science moderne entre Renaissance et Lumières* (Rome: 2008). Another part has

developing several preliminary hypotheses about the different types of hubs that helped shape the knowledge that constituted Rome as a global city. It will bring together both micro-(urban) and macro-(global) levels addressing Rome as a world city dominated by interests and conflicts between different social groups—both local as well as European and non-European.

The chapter's central hypothesis suggests that, as the temporal and spiritual head of Christianity, Rome had to convert its claims of religious universalism into technical—both human and material—expertise in order to establish global hegemony through a broad process of knowledge production. This process required networks to collect and transport information and to also decipher and circulate the material processed, in order to produce knowledge accessible and relevant to all of Europe beyond the diverse political, religious, or cultural boundaries that fragmented the region at that time.

Multi-sited Mediations: Putting Into Practice Rome's Universal Claims

A broad and rich tradition of research endorses the centrality of Rome as a world city during the early modern period by assuming that its status as the capital of the Christian world sufficiently explains its centrality. But one might argue that the religious function alone does not sufficiently justify a position of political centrality—which varies according to the period and geographic region under consideration—especially on a global scale. Additionally, by approaching Rome from the perspective of intellectual history or the his-

been published in Donato M.P. – Kraye J. (eds.), *Conflicting Duties: Science, Medicine and Religion in Rome (1550–1750)* (London: 2009). Some more analytical perspectives have been shared with Stéphane Van Damme, with whom I had the opportunity to edit the special issue “Sciences et villes-mondes: Penser les savoirs au large (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle)”, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 55 (2008). The introduction to this special issue has then been re-elaborated as “Science and World Cities: Thinking Urban Knowledge and Science at Large (16th–18th century)”, *Itinerario: European Journal of Overseas History* 33 (2009) 79–95. I spent the last few years working on other questions related to the scales of production of knowledge in the early modern period, in relation to the rise of global history. During this period, I have always had the opportunity to discuss the Roman case with two colleagues whose work has constantly stimulated my own: Elisa Andretta and Maria-Antonietta Visceglia. One set of results was published in a special issue of *Quaderni storici* ed. with S. Brevaglieri: “Produzione di saperi: Costruzione di spazi”, *Quaderni storici* (2013) and in a collective book, Kontler L. – Romano A. – Sebastiani S. – Török B.Z. (eds.), *Negotiating Knowledge in Early Modern Empires: A Decentred View* (New York, NY: 2014). The other set is included in my book, *Une Chine de papier: Les savoirs européens sur l'Asie (16^e–17^e siècle)* (Paris: 2016).

tory of science, most of the historiographical tradition has strongly denied southern Europe's participation in the so-called 'scientific revolution', thus excluding Rome, Madrid, Lisbon, and Naples from the map of 'modernity'.⁴ A strong prejudice against Catholicism as a possible framework for the rise of modernity, derived from Max Weber and applied to early modern science by Robert K. Merton, is a significant factor in this rejection.⁵ Irrespective of this possible prejudice, the question deserves an investigation rooted in precisely executed enquiries.

It is true that some structural aspects of its functions and organization provide the city of Rome with a transnational status that can be easily identified within the urban structure itself. First of all, its long history as a capital is visually present throughout the entire city: Traces of the Roman Empire's expansion were visible in the Renaissance city and included not only the city's Greek roots but also its Asian conquests. Less conspicuous, but relevant nonetheless, were those 'foreign' populations that inhabited several areas of the city, including Florentine, Portuguese, and Spanish communities, among others. These 'nations' lived around and attended their own respective churches, which signalled the presence of diverse communities representative of Europe as a whole, beyond the confines of the Italian peninsula. Less permanent, but equally significant, were the Jubilee years. Carefully organized during the sixteenth century, they not only attracted thousands of pilgrims but also provided the popes with the opportunity to launch large and expensive urban programs that reinforced the city's spectacular dimensions—especially after the destruction of 1527—and its constant staging of universality through monuments and decorations.⁶ And if 'the term "site" carries multiple meanings, simultaneously evoking a structural or systematic positioning, a

4 The most recent approaches in the history of science have, interestingly, switched the analytical perspective from the history of science to the history of knowledge, in order to provide a historical perspective of what is identified as the 'ancien régime des savoirs'. See Damme S. Van, "Un ancien régime des sciences et des savoirs", in Damme S. Van (ed.), *De la Renaissance aux Lumières, Histoire des sciences et des savoirs 1* (Paris: 2015); Romano A., "Fabriquer l'histoire des sciences modernes: Réflexions sur une discipline à l'ère de la mondialisation", *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 70 (2015) 381–408.

5 Weber M., *L'éthique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme* (Paris: 2008); Merton R.K., "Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England", *Osiris* (1938) 360–632.

6 Art historians have offered highly elaborated contributions to these different aspects. Among the most inspiring is Labrot G., *L'image de Rome: Une arme pour la Contre-Réforme, 1534–1677* (Paris: 1987). For one of the first studies to acknowledge the performative dimension of the capitalization effect, see Chastel A., *Le sac de Rome, 1527: Du premier maniérisme à la Contre-Réforme* (Paris: 1984). On the symbolic and effective importance of jubilees and pilgrimages, see Boutry P. – Julia D. (eds.), *Pèlerins et pèlerinages dans l'Europe moderne* (Rome: 2000).

sphere of agency, and a space of interaction', as suggested by the editors of this volume, Rome is definitely such a site. Sixteenth-century Rome is not only the capital of sacred history, but also contains what we would today consider a significant part of the European heritage: It is both the place of death of the apostle Peter and the sanctified site of the first Christian catacombs. But it corresponds as well to a living artefact of Antiquity, as described by the La Pléiade poets and the first cartographers and printers from the district surrounding the Pantheon who commercialized the area while establishing its place in the first chorographic maps of the city.⁷ Because of Rome's identification with Antiquity—as represented by physicians, poets, painters, philosophers, and mathematicians—the search throughout the sixteenth century for a new epistemology of knowledge related to the past makes the legacy of the ancients a vivid question, and not only a retrospective projection of our anxieties. Both inhabitants and visitors saw sixteenth-century Rome as a living laboratory that elucidated the past and mediated its relationship to the present. Antiquarianism and philology were the two major sciences practiced there, thanks to the site's abundant resources available to those interested in history. The very soil and landscape of the city were like an open book documenting Antiquity, while the stones of the ancient monuments contained its archaic languages (mostly Greek but also hieroglyphs and Hebrew), which were closer to the Holy Scripture than anywhere else and crucial tools in performing critical readings of ancient texts. Beyond this line of argument convincingly put forth by Arnaldo Momigliano,⁸ I would like to introduce a third element into the past/present dialogue that has shaped the reading of Rome. I will argue that (late) sixteenth-century Rome appears as a (global) site of mediation between Europe and the 'other'—that new part of the globe just discovered and culturally disconnected from the ancient roots of European culture.⁹

7 Ditchfield S., "Text before Trowel: Antonio Bosio's *Roma Sotteranea* Revisited", in Swanson R.N. (ed.), *Studies in Church History* 33 (1997) 343–360; Besse J.-M. – Dubourg Glatigny P., "Cartographier Rome au XVI^e siècle (1544–1599): Décrire et reconstituer", in Romano, *Rome et la science* 369–414. Also relevant is Harkness D., *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven, CT – London: 2007), which offers an inspiring comparative perspective shaped by the street.

8 Momigliano A., "Ancient History and the Antiquarian", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950) 285–315; Grafton A., *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, MA: 1991). See also Schnapp A., *La conquête du passé: Aux origines de l'archéologie* (Paris: 1993).

9 The relevance of the trilogy in relation to the Renaissance was first emphasized by Michel de Certeau in his *L'écriture de l'histoire* (Paris: 1975) and then by François Hartog, in his inspiring *Anciens, modernes, sauvages* (Paris: 2005). Their approach, rooted in intellectual history, runs parallel to the social and material history of science and knowledge, as I suggest here.

Indeed, claims that Rome's universality and centrality were well established in the sixteenth century need to be critically examined. During this century, Europe was forced to simultaneously reassess its understanding of the world and question the medieval association between the universality of the Church and its uniqueness and superiority as a spiritual power. Three major events contributed to the destabilization of the ancient order and the elaboration of appropriate responses. At the turn of the century, Europe suddenly became the 'Old World' when confronted with the discovery of America or the 'New World': This was the first concrete expression of a need to redefine the vocabulary of an expanded globe. In the decades that followed, both the development of the Protestant movement and the devastation of the European wars leading to the sack of the *urbs*, proved to be two sides of the same coin: the internal crisis of the *Christianitas*. Last, but not least, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, which challenged the *Reconquista's* claims of Spanish victory over Islam, demonstrated that non-Christian empires can take root in Europe. These were the three major cataclysms that Rome faced as it renegotiated its status as both a site of mediation and a player on a global scale.

Rome: The Knowledge of the World in a Nutshell

I would like to focus on a particular moment in this long sixteenth century: the 1580s, during which the papacy's launching of the post-Tridentine policy coincides with the unification of the two Iberian crowns and the establishment of imperial European and Catholic domination in all four parts of the world.¹⁰ This specific geopolitical conjecture is expressed on the printing stage where the Holy City becomes the privileged—if not unique—site of mediation for the concrete manifestation of global intellectual domination.

The French lawyer and humanist Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), who visited the Holy City in early 1580, writes about his first impressions of the pope, the embodiment of universality, in a manner that weaves together these three points:

c'est un très beau vieillard, d'une moyenne taille, et droite, le visage plein de majesté, une longue barbe blanche, âgé lors de plus de quatre-vingts ans, le plus sein pour cet âge, et vigoureux qu'il est possible de désirer, sans gouste, sans colique, sans mal d'estomac, et sans aucune [...] je dis hors de toute mesure [...] il a bâti des collèges pour les Grecs, pour les Anglais, Ecossais, Français, pour les Allemands, et pour les Polacs, qu'il a

10 Gruzinski S., *Les quatre parties du monde: Histoire d'une mondialisation* (Paris: 2004).

dotés de plus de dix mille écus chacun de rente à perpétuité; outre la dépense infinie des bâtiments. Il l'a fait pour appeler à l'église les enfants de ces nations-là corrompues de mauvaises opinions contre l'église; et là les enfants sont logés, nourris, habillés, instruits, et accommodés de toute choses, sans qu'il y aille un quattrin du leur, à quoi que ce soit.¹¹

The pope's body interests Montaigne, whose Italian tour was motivated by a search for medicine and new cures. But the second element he describes is the character of a builder of educational institutions that hosted children from many foreign nations. In addition to those already mentioned, there were others, mirroring a fragmented Europe that Rome desired to unify in order to re-establish its own unity and hegemony.¹² Alongside these papal actions, various diplomatic attempts to reopen the discussion with the Orthodox Church contributed to the expansion of the world Rome desired to control. In the years before Montaigne's visit, Antonio Possevino had been sent to Moscovia as a papal delegate, charged with reintegrating the Oriental Church into the Roman one;¹³ the first efforts to establish dialogue with the Christian communities of the Middle East developed in the same period along the same political

11 Montaigne Michel de, *Journal de voyage de Michel de Montaigne en Italie par la Suisse et l'Allemagne en 1580 en 1581*, mis en français moderne et présenté par C. Pinganaud (Paris: 2006) 134. [...] a very fine old man of the middle height, holding himself very upright, with a majestic countenance, and a long white beard. He was at this time more than eighty years old, but looking as healthy and vigorous as a man need wish to be at that age, without gout, or stone, or indigestion, or any bodily infirmity whatever. [...] He is charitable even to an excess. [...] He has built colleges for the Greeks, the English, the Scotch, the French, the Germans, and the Poles, each of which he has endowed with upwards of ten thousand crowns a year in perpetuity, besides the enormous expense he was at in building them. His object, in founding these, was to recall to the bosom of the church the children of those nations who, corrupted by evil opinions, have wandered from the true faith; and here these children are lodged, fed, clothed, educated, and provided with everything they need, without having to advance one farthing of their own, from first to last, Hazlitt W. (ed.), *The Complete Works by Michel de Montaigne*, 4 vols. (London: 1892) vol. 4, 301.

12 See Fiorani F. – Prosperi A. (eds.), *Roma, la città del papa: Vita civile e religiosa dal Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII al Giubileo di Papa Wojtila*, Storia d'Italia, Annali 16 (Turin: 2000); Cuccio G. (ed.), *Roma moderna*, Storia di Roma 4 (Rome – Bari: 2002).

13 Mund S., "La mission diplomatique du père Antonio Possevino (S.J.) chez Ivan le Terrible en 1581–1582 et les premiers écrits jésuites sur la Russie moscovite à la fin du XVI^e siècle", *Cahiers du monde russe* 45 (2004) 407–440.

line.¹⁴ While attending a ‘pontifical reception’, Montaigne became acquainted with Possevino as well as the Patriarch of Antioch, ‘vieux patriarche d’Antioche, arabe, très bien versé en cinq ou six langues de celles de delà, et n’ayant nulle connaissance de la grecque et autres nôtres, avec qui j’avais pris beaucoup de familiarité, me fit présent d’une certaine mixtion pour le secours de ma gravelle, et m’en prescrivit l’usage par écrit’.¹⁵

Complementary to this first glimpse of the expanded Roman world, his visit to the Vatican library allowed him to simultaneously encounter the ancient world, the New World, and the unknown world of Asia. In this ‘site of knowledge’¹⁶ actively supported and promoted by the pope’s patronage, he moved from Greek and Roman manuscripts and inscriptions to the few preserved codices brought back from America, to early examples of Chinese books circulating in Europe.¹⁷ Although he could not read or understand everything he saw, touched, and smelled, the very materiality of these other forms of literacy would have been sufficient to allow him a concrete sense of a ‘new’ world expanded to both the East and the West Indies. He might have visited the ‘gallery of the maps’—a sophisticated cartographical project implemented in

14 Girard A., “Entre croisade et politique culturelle au Levant: Rome et l’union des chrétiens syriens (première moitié du XVII^e siècle)”, in Visceglia M.-A. (ed.), *La politica internazionale del papato nella prima età moderna* (Rome: 2013) 419–437; Girard A., “*Nihil esse innovandum?* Maintien des rites orientaux et négociation de l’Union des Églises orientales avec Rome (fin XVI^e–mi-XVIII^e s.)”, in Blanchet M.-H. – Gabriel F. (eds.), *Réduire le schisme? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l’Union entre Orient et Occident, (XIII^e–XVIII^e siècles)*, Travaux et Mémoires éditée par l’Association des Amis du Centre d’Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance 39 (Paris: 2013) 337–352.

15 Montaigne, *Journal* 154–155. ‘[...] an Arabian, thoroughly versed in five or six of the Eastern languages, but utterly unacquainted with Greek and most of the other European tongues, with whom [Montaigne] had become very intimate, [who] gave [him] a mixture for [his] stone, with written directions how to use it’, Hazlitt, *The Complete Works* 320.

16 See Jacob C. (ed.), *Les lieux de savoir: Espaces et communautés* (Paris: 2007) 21: ‘Les savoirs ‘font lieu’ à travers des institutions qui les enracinent et déterminent leur sphère d’influence, sur le double mode de l’attraction et de la diffusion. Ils peuvent aussi se matérialiser dans un dispositif architectural et mobilier, dans une collection de livres ou d’objets, dans une institution vouée à leur production, à leur archivage ou à leur rayonnement public.’ As for the title’s translation from the French, I follow Jacob’s choice: <http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/de/aktuelles/nachrichten/detail/m/keynote-lecture-by-christian-jacob.html> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

17 Rigolot F., “6 mars 1581: Montaigne visita la Vaticana”, in Ceresa M. (ed.), *La Biblioteca Vaticana tra Riforma cattolica, crescita delle collezioni e nuovo edificio (1535–1590)*, Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 3 vols. (Vatican City: 2012) vol. 2, 281–304. See also Daniela Bleichmar’s chapter in this volume.

one of the library corridors by Ignazio Danti, a Dominican who also joined the papal commission for the reform of the Julian calendar. We do know that when Montaigne went to Caprarola, it was to see ‘the palace of Cardinal Farnese, the most famous in Italy [...] nothing in this country to be compared with’, especially one room: ‘a marvel, which has in its vaulted roof the celestial world with all its constellations, and on its walls the terrestrial with all the regions accurately displayed, every detail being richly painted on the wall aforesaid’.¹⁸ These walls offered the French humanist, or any traveller visiting this place, a glimpse of the vastness of the world displayed with the new understanding of the earth as a globe where each part of it is also part of a whole, as illustrated by world maps.¹⁹

Rome: An Arena of Knowledge Competitions

During these years, the possibility to connect and contain the world through many actors, places of knowledge—both institutional and non-institutional—and objects, derives from characteristics specific to Rome. One such characteristic was the unique social composition of its population, particularly an abundance of aristocratic families, like the Farneses, the Borgias, or the Barberinis. This social milieu was, then, very international due to its connections abroad, fuelled by marriages, transnational economic and culture exchanges, and diplomatic activities.²⁰ Another significant element was the social organization of large groups of people—or ‘families’—and an original court system that counted among its members hundreds of artisans, domestic workers, artists, and physicians, just to name a few. The polycentric curial system enhanced the cosmopolitanism of Rome while encouraging cosmopolitan forms of sociability and long-distance networking between individuals in Italy, Europe, and beyond.²¹

18 Montaigne, *Journal* 443. For more information about Ignazio Danti, a Dominican, see Dubourg Glatigny P., *Il disegno naturale del mondo: Saggio sulla biografia di Egnatio Danti, con edizione del carteggio* (Perugia: 2011).

19 Partridge L., “The Room of Maps at Caprarola, 1573–75”, *The Art Bulletin* 77 (1995) 413–444.

20 For a discussion about the Spanish aristocracy see Yun-Casalilla, B. (ed.), *Las redes del Imperio: Elites sociales en la articulación del imperio español, 1492–1714* (Madrid: 2008). On the Roman case and a renewed analysis of the diplomatic activities, see Visceglia, *La politica internazionale*. See also Andretta E. – Valeri E. – Volpini P. – Visceglia M.A. (eds.), *Tramiti: Figure e strumenti della mediazione culturale nella prima età moderna* (Rome: 2015).

21 Caffiero M. – Donato M.P. – Romano A., “De la catholicité post-tridentine à la République romaine: Splendeurs et misères des intellectuels courtisans”, in Boutier J. – Marin B. –

In addition to its social configuration, the institutional profile of Rome implemented its multi-scalar position and its global relevance. Montaigne's travelogue echoes the fact that Rome is, above all, the seat of the religious institution *par excellence*, that is, the Church. Following him around the city, the reader is taken from one place to another. In this sense, the richness of the Vatican library has to be seen as one piece of a larger and structured intellectual system made of additional and interconnected elements, like the polyglot print that used new communication media to unify Babel, or the Vatican museums that collected not just art but also natural artefacts, displayed in the botanical garden and documented in the *Metalloteca*. The project of a global 'system of knowledge' promoted by the papal state was among the most sophisticated attempts to establish European cultural hegemony in response to the three major challenges mentioned above.²² It would be useful to compare it with other parallel projects, like those supported by the Spanish crown.²³

Although rooted in the pope's own agenda, this global apparatus was reinforced by other actors faced with the same challenges, such as the missionary orders and the Society of Jesus. It is important to distinguish both from the Roman Curia: Although their employees overlap and the regular clergy is hierarchically dependent on the pope, they sometimes diverge with regards to goals and methods.

Romano A. (eds.), *Naples, Rome, Florence: Une histoire comparée des milieux intellectuels italiens (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles)*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 355 (Rome: 2005) 171–208.

- 22 The work by Elisa Andretta demonstrates the importance of the medical culture as an epistemological framework for this Roman attempt. She investigates the role of physicians in the Roman curia as the major actors of this scientific programme, shedding light, in particular, on the reasons for such a structural link between medicine and the other disciplines. See Andretta E., '*Roma Medica*': *Anatomie d'un système médical au XVI^e siècle*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 448 (Rome: 2011); Andretta E., "Andrés Laguna, Juan Valverde e la circolazione scientifica tra Roma e la Spagna nel '500", in Perbys P. (ed.), *Early Modern Rome 1341–1667: Proceedings of a Conference held in Rome, May 13–15, 2010* (Ferrara: 2011) 392–406; Andretta E., "Medical Culture of the Spaniards of Italy in the Renaissance: Scientific Communication, Learned Practices and Medicine in the Correspondence of Juan Páez de Castro, 1545–1552", in Lopéz-Terrada M.L. – Pardo-Tomás J. – Slater J. (eds.), *Medical Cultures in the Early Modern Spanish Empire* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2014) 129–147.
- 23 A first step toward such a programme corresponds with the current project developed by Elisa Andretta, in her comparison of the two courts of the Vatican and of the El Escorial as places of medical knowledge. Based on the analysis of universal libraries, Paola Molino's research on Vienna's library raises some of the very same questions I discuss here.

Two major points should be emphasized here in relation to discussions of the missionaries in current historiography: They are given too much credit as agents of the global knowledge production generated by Rome, and the focus on the order founded in 1540 is excessive. This is a matter of historiography: The renewed interest in the Jesuits has been critically discussed in recent scholarship, and their particular focus on the world as an object of evangelization is by now well established.²⁴ But it is erroneous to consider them the unique agent of early Catholic globalization. It is sufficient to point out that, independently from the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Capuchins around the world made important contributions to the enrichment of the Roman site of knowledge through their libraries.²⁵ They had undertaken the ‘spiritual conquest’ of the New World since the very beginning of the Conquest, and by the end of the century they had turned their attention to Asia.

Displaying the World: Accumulating Knowledge

Moving from one religious institution, or *curia generalis*, to another, the display of the world was more broadly disseminated among the Roman intellectual milieu than anywhere else in Europe.²⁶ However, even if it is possible to describe Rome as a global city or site of mediation, such a status is fluctuant and unstable, as it is constantly being challenged and renegotiated. Each site of mediation should thus constantly be reconsidered as such, and its definition reconsidered following a thick chronology.

24 Fabre P.-A. – Romano A. (eds.) “Les jésuites dans le monde moderne: Nouvelles approches historiographiques”, special issue of *Revue de Synthèse* 120 (1999) 247–491; Broggio P. – Cantù F. – Fabre P.-A. – Romano A. (eds.), *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva: Strategie politiche, religiose e culturali tra Cinque e Seicento* (Brescia: 2007); Fabre P.-A. – Vincent B. (eds.), *Missions religieuses modernes: ‘Notre lieu est le monde’*, Collection de l’École Française de Rome 376 (Rome: 2007); Castelnau-l’Estoile C. de – Copete M.-L. – Maldavsky A. – Županov I.G. (eds.), *Missions d’évangélisation et circulation des savoirs: XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Madrid: 2011).

25 Evidence of this can be seen in the digital exhibition *Angelo Rocca: Erudito e bibliofilo* of the *Biblioteca Angelica* in Rome, see <http://www.bibliotecaangelica.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/210/angelo-rocca-erudito-e-bibliofilo> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

26 The case of Venice provides us with another kind of display—much more Ottoman-oriented—as suggested by the 2007 exhibition *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797*, organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A comparison with Antwerp, whose global centrality was shaped by other agents, could be very fruitful.

This leads to a second provisional conclusion: These other institutions, like the religious orders, played what may be called an aggregate part in the configuration of Roman centrality. Thanks to the additional strength provided by their own networks, agents, expertise, and resources, they did not only contribute to the cumulative dimension of the knowledge production process, but they also helped shape its distinctive configuration by contributing other tools, perspectives, and practices. Such a statement does not neglect the fact that there was intense competition and even violent tension and conflict between the orders themselves, or between the orders and the Church. Such oppositions developed into controversies, which became an integral part of the process.²⁷ Missionary orders complemented the papal seat as the central place of the Christian world by adding their own seats, which meant the settlement of often highly educated, aristocratic foreigners within the urban space. Additionally, they organized archival, translation, and pedagogical activities. But they were also crucial in strengthening the Roman position on a global scale, through their own networks, rooted in Iberian expansion.

What does this mean exactly, and how does it impact this analysis? There is, indeed, a concrete meaning at stake: The role of the two Iberian crowns in the evangelization of the New World had been sanctioned by the pope's Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. The result of the treaty was the development of evangelization alongside imperial expansions throughout the sixteenth century. As they travelled east shaping the route that would become the *Estado da India*, the Portuguese brought missionaries to the Middle East and India. Moving west across the Atlantic, the Spaniards conquered, dominated, and disciplined the American continent. Upon reaching the Pacific coast, they began to explore this new ocean. Both empires mapped itineraries connected to Rome as soon as Rome became necessary to them. And this happened after the two Indies merged in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, when there was no more longitudinal line to indicate the borders of each empire. By the 1570s, China—the last stop on the long eastern pedestrian route initiated by Francis Xavier (1506–1552) in the 1550s, as well as the new western frontier for Spaniards settled in the Philippine islands—became the new site of rivalries between missionaries and monarchies. As the city of Rome housed the papal state that had jurisdiction over both the regular and secular clergy, the seats of all the religious orders competing around the world and the permanent representatives of the Spanish authorities, it could not escape its role as the tribune, floor, and stage of

27 In the last thirty years, the study of controversies has formed the core of the new trend in history of science. See Shaffer S. – Shapin S., *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: 1985).

these conflicts and rivalries.²⁸ This is how the system of *Patronato* or *Padroado* informed the configuration of Rome as a site of mediation on a global scale.

In this sense, Rome is not only or simply the centre of one unique or unified web. It is the crossroad of many of them: a multi-layered site of convergence that is able to communicate with all parts of the world. Within the city, the so-called Spanish Rome mirrors part of what has just been described.²⁹ This presence is referred to here in order to illustrate the additional connectivity of the city, and the way in which such 'national Romes' come together. Indeed, the permanence of foreign groups of priests as well as aristocrats with their own courts functioned as multiple sub-hubs, forming distinct networks that distinguished themselves as nodes of information and places of knowledge engaged with different areas of the world.

1585: The Nodal Point

In the 1580s, the Augustinian monk Juan González de Mendoza (1545–1618), who had spent some time as a missionary in New Spain, published his *Historia del Gran Reino de China* in Rome and dedicated it to the pope. As a Spanish member of a mendicant order at the moment when the Ming Chinese Empire was at the core of debates in Madrid and its colonies—mostly Manila and Mexico—Mendoza's strategy to lay claim to that part of the world was to use the Roman institution of publishing. In so doing, he brought to Rome all the available knowledge about China, gathered and processed by the mendicant orders circulating in this region since mid-century through the Manila route. Aware that the first Jesuits were settling there, he argued that the mendicant orders should be charged with the evangelization of this last corner of the world.³⁰

That same year, a 'Japanese embassy' joined the Holy City and was welcomed by Claudio Acquaviva, an Italian who succeeded two philo-Spaniards as superior general of the Society of Jesus (1581). The embassy spent a few months there, where it happened to attend the funeral of Pope Gregory XIII, and the election of his successor, Sixtus V. Rather than in a detailed analysis of this

28 It is not possible to give a detailed account here of how scholarship around this issue has developed in the last decade. Among the most important works is Ollé M., *La empresa de China: De la Armada invencible al Galeón de Manila* (Barcelona: 2002).

29 Dandeleit T., *Spanish Rome, 1500–1700* (New Haven, CT: 2002).

30 See Romano A., "La prima storia della Cina: Juan Gonzales de Mendoza fra l'Impero spagnolo e Roma", *Quaderni storici* 1 (2013) 89–116.

'embassy', I am interested in the fact that two events, completely independent from one another, converged to produce the unexpected presence of the Far East in Rome so that the city helped shape European knowledge about Asia as well as other parts of the globe. The synchrony between these different events has not yet been analysed. Thus, my intention is to lay the foundations for this connected study in order to highlight the mechanisms that transformed a site of mediation into a world city.

The so-called embassy had a very complicated status and scope. Conceived and implemented by a Jesuit missionary—who had been named procurator general of the Asian territory by the general of the order in Rome—the embassy was composed of four young Japanese men belonging to converted families from the southern part of the archipelago, along with a Jesuit who was in charge of them. The procurator endeavoured to send Europe a 'living postcard' to provide the Catholic world with a concrete idea of Japan that would support the argument for a mission there. The group departed from Nagasaki in 1582 and disembarked in Lisbon in August 1584 after two years and six months of travelling. On the journey to Rome they passed through Evora, Toledo, Madrid, and finally Alcala, where they crossed the sea to Livorno and then continued on through Pisa, Florence, and Siena. Their official entry into Rome took place on 22 March 1585. In the days that followed, they had the good fortune to have audiences with both Pope Gregory XIII, who was already dying at that time, and with Pope Sixtus V, who was elected on 24 April after Pope Gregory's death. On 3 June, they left the Holy City to travel to Venice and then on to several other cities of the northern Italian Peninsula.³¹ The trip back to Japan followed the *Estado da India* route. The embassy received an exuberant welcome when they finally returned to Nagasaki on 21 July 1590, more than eight years after their departure. During their sojourn in Europe they also had audiences with King Philip II, and were received by many of the most important political, ecclesiastical, and social figures in the places they visited. They were the first visitors from Japan who travelled to Europe. In this respect, there are some questions that deserve close attention, particularly in relation to the mediation processes that occurred throughout their travels.

The first has to do with the motives and meaning of a journey to Rome by Japanese travellers at the dusk of the sixteenth century. In other words: Through

31 Lach D., *The Century of Discovery, Asia in the Making of Europe* 1 (Chicago, IL: 1965) 688; Cooper M., *The Japanese Mission to Europe, 1582–1590: The Journey of Four Samurai Boys through Portugal, Spain and Italy* (Folkestone: 2005); D'Ascenzo A., *Cultura geografica e cartografia in Italia alla fine del Cinquecento: Il Trattato universale di Urbano Monte* (Rome: 2012) 11–26.

which social, political, and/or cultural channels did Rome become part of the world map of visitors from other parts of the world, and who were these visitors? The second question deals with the knowledge such travels carry with them, including where and how—in this chapter it is only Rome that I am interested in. The third question has to do with the ‘cumulative effects’ of this knowledge in relation to the Roman view of the world.³²

Part of the answer to the first question is simple: The Japanese who met with the pope in March 1585 were four adolescents, aged thirteen to fourteen. They belonged to families who had been in contact with Portuguese merchants and missionaries since the 1540s. These families represented the domination of the daimyo—a group of territorial military lords who engaged in extensive warfare and looting. At the beginning of the 1600s, they were unified under the leadership of Tokugawa Ieyasu, inaugurating the Edo period. By 1571 the Portuguese had obtained the right to settle in Nagasaki and had implemented commerce between Iberian Europe and Japan. The Japanese showed interest in converting, and the letters sent by the Jesuit missionaries from Japan were printed and displayed throughout Europe. Parallel to the initiation of trade and commerce, evangelization had also developed beginning in 1549. European missionaries—mostly Jesuits—developed what Francis Xavier had launched in southern Japan. This active program of conversion appeared to be successful—and this part of the story was well disseminated in Europe—as by the early 1580s there were already 150,000 conversions mentioned by Jesuit sources.³³ Nevertheless, the role of the mission and the programme of evangelization needed to be further justified to the pope and to the superior general, so that more support could be garnered.

This is the general context of the embassy. Its participants included Mancio Itō Sukemasu, who represented both the daimyo of Bungo and his grandfather Otomo Yoshishige, a recent convert to Christianity; Michael Chijiwa Seizaemon, a nephew of both Omura Sumitada, an Omura daimyo baptized in 1563, and Arima Harunobu, daimyo of Arima; two other young men, Julien Nakaura and Martin Hara; and the Jesuit missionary who travelled with them, Dogo de Mesquita.³⁴ Our knowledge of the embassy mostly comes from the analysis of the person responsible for it—Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606),

32 Revel J., “Le pied du diable: Sur les formes de la cumulativité en histoire”, in Walliser B. (ed.), *La cumulativité du savoir en sciences sociales* (Paris: 2010) 85–110.

33 See Elisonas J., “Christianity and the Daimyo”, in Hall J.W. (ed.), *Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge History of Japan 4 (Cambridge: 1991) 302.

34 About Japan in this period see Hall, *Early Modern Japan* 301–373.

the Jesuit general visitor for Asia, who had settled in the region in 1574, when he first joined Goa.

It is not my intention to discuss Valignano's views and actions in detail.³⁵ Rather, what interests me is that the 'encounter' between Japan and Europe on European soil was initiated by Europe and was, consequently, deeply asymmetrical: The representatives of Japan helped to promote a Catholic world-view. And yet this configuration is not necessarily an obstacle to knowledge production. What this example may suggest is that a site of mediation need not be symmetrical. As far as the early modern period is concerned, the issue of symmetry is highly relevant when contacts, exchanges, and encounters are at stake. There are two opposing interpretations that must be avoided: either reducing all contact between Europeans and non-Europeans to a colonial enterprise by projecting a Eurocentric reading onto it, or adopting a perspective of the world—especially in this first period of globalization—as a *métis* world where connections and symmetries are all equivalent.

It is important to note that Valignano's view was rooted in a nuanced analysis based on the knowledge he had gathered while travelling through South-East Asia for approximately a decade. His view was not only based on southern Japan but also on India and China, as Goa and Macao provided him, as well as other Europeans actors, with two resource hubs. In this regard, the issues at stake with the Japanese embassy related not only to Japan, but more broadly to Southeast Asia. That is, the travellers conveyed to Rome an image of Japan, but also of China, as Valignano had charged the missionary responsible for the young Japanese with the task of reporting to Europe about China and the pending question of its conversion. The result was an unpublished text entitled *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compania de Jesus en las Indias orientales*.³⁶ Thus, in 1585 two major sources of information about China made their appearance on the Roman stage, as Valignano's text could be compared to González de Mendoza's book, *Historia del Gran Reino de China*.

Consequently there was a massive amount of information being circulated by the embassy and then processed in Rome in order to integrate it into the existing local order of knowledge. The physical presence of people from the Far East concretely connected this region to Europe, thus stimulating the

35 See, among others, Lage Reis Correia P., *A concepção de missão na Apologia de Valignano*, Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau (Lisbon: 2008).

36 Xavier Francisco, *Monumenta Xaveriana ex autographis vel ex antiquioribus exemplis collecta*, 2 vols., (Madrid: 1899–1912) vol. 1, *Sancti Francisci Xaverii epistolas aliaque scripta complectens quibus praemittitur ejus vita a p. Alexandro Valignano S.J. ex India Romam missa*.



FIGURE 1.1 Anon. (artist), *Neue Zeyttung / aus der Insel Japonien* (Augsburg, Michael Manger: 1586). Coloured woodcut, 29 × 37.2 cm.

IMAGE © PUBLIC DOMAIN.

production of knowledge related to this part of the world. Flyers representing the young ambassadors were distributed by Rome not only along the group's itinerary, but also in most European cities. [Fig. 1.1] This presence also stimulated the publication of news related to Asia: In 1586, the Roman printer Francesco Zanetti published the *Auuisi del Giapone*; two years later, he offered an updated version, *Auuisi della Cina et Giapone*.³⁷

37 *Auuisi del Giapone de gli anni 1582. 83. 84. Con alcuni altri della Cina dell'83. et 84. Cauati dalle lettere della Comapgnia del Giesù. Riceuute il mese di Dicembre 1584. Cauate dalle lettere del P. Luigi Frois* (Rome, Francesco Zanetti: 1586) and *Auuisi della Cina et Giapone del fine dell'anno 1586. Con l'arriuio delli signori Giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù. Riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588* (Rome, Francesco Zanetti: 1588). In the following years, he continues to contribute this kind of material to the European printing market: *Lettere del Giapone, et della Cina de gl'anni 1589 & 1590* (Rome, Luigi Zanetti: 1591); *Copia di due lettere annue scritte dal Giapone del 1589 & 1590. L'vna dal p. viceprouinciale al p. Alessandro Valignano, l'altra dal p. Luigi Frois al p. Generale della Compagnia di Giesu. Et dalla spagnuola nella italiana lingua tradotte dal p. Gasparo Spitilli della Compagnia medesima* (Rome, Luigi Zanetti: 1593); *Copia di due lettere scritte dal P. Organtino bresciano*

It is interesting to follow the publication trail on a European scale—beyond confessional borders—and through their translation into various vernacular languages. In 1586, Zanetti published a follow-up work entitled *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi a Roma*.³⁸ Its author, Guido Gualtieri, was a member of the papal administration and a client of Sixtus V, and may have been an eyewitness to the embassy's arrival. Significantly, his book documents the Japanese presence in Rome by transforming an event, ephemeral by definition, into a legacy, thus inscribing it into Roman history.³⁹

It must be acknowledged that the quality of the ephemeral printed material—like the broadsheet—was decidedly mediocre and that copying, borrowing, and translating were everyday practices in the European book market. But interestingly, these different categories of materials reveal the subtle presence and intensification of South-East Asia in Europe encouraged by Rome. The strategy of communication developed by Valignano while in Goa uses words, images, and people to introduce this Oriental border and limit of the world to Europe.

The Shaping of a Commensurable World

As emphasized by these publications, the arrival of the Japanese embassy and its European leader brought different perspectives of South-East Asia to Rome, and one of the most tangible results was the comparative approach implemented by this process. Two kinds of comparisons were engaged here. The first was between Japan and Europe,⁴⁰ while the second was between Japan and China.

della Compagnia di Giesu dal Meaco del Giappone. Tradotte dal P. Gio. Battista Peruschi (Rome, Luigi Zanetti: 1597). In doing so he definitely stimulates other local printers, as it is the case in Venice with *Nuovi auvisi del Giappone con alcuni altri della Cina del 83, et 84. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesu. Riceuute il mese di dicembre passato 1585 del p. Luigi Frois* (Venice, I Gioliti: 1586).

38 Gualtieri Guido, *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi a Roma fino alla partita di Lisbona: Con le accoglienze fatte loro da tutti i Principi Christiani, et dove sono passati* (Rome, Francesco Zanetti: 1586).

39 Gallo V., "Guido Gualtieri", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 60 (2003), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-gualtieri_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-gualtieri_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (accessed: 02.08.2016); Allevi F., "Guido Gualtieri 'litterarum apostolicarum abbreviator' e storico di Sisto V", in *Le diocesi delle Marche in età sistina, (Ancona-Loreto, 16–18 ottobre 1986)* (Fano: 1988) 55–140.

40 There is no evidence, as far as I know, of a twofold perspective on this issue: The Japanese embassy did not develop any kind of research or investigation about Europe in the Edo

Comparing Japan and China was part of the missionaries' practices, particularly that of Valignano. In his letters, as well as in the instructions given to the mentor of the young Japanese delegates, he constantly discusses the two countries in relation to one another.⁴¹ This entangled view has to do with his position as the procurator of Asia: He was a traveller capable of measuring the diverse cultures and peoples inhabiting the region but, at the same time, he represented an institution whose evangelizing purpose required that he assesses the progress of the conversion by comparing two very different nations.⁴²

In so doing, he contributed to the shaping of a commensurable world in accordance with the Roman instruments of measurement: By staging the visit of the young boys through diplomatic language, he guaranteed the commensurability of this part of the world, namely Japan and China together. Moreover, Valignano's choice of the embassy to introduce this part of the Eastern Indies

area. This does not mean that the Japanese were uninterested in further contact with Europe. Specific research on the second Japanese embassy of 1615 is needed to further examine this question. Some elements in Cattaneo A., "Geographical Curiosities and Transformative Exchange in the *Nanban* Century (c. 1549–c. 1647)", *Études Épistémè* 26 (2014) <http://episteme.revues.org/329> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

41 Xavier, *Monumenta Xaveriana* vol. 1, 158: 'El reyno de la China es tan diferente de todos los demás reynos y naciones que hay en todo este Oriente, assí en la qualidad de la gente y sus costumbres, como en la qualidad y fertilidad de la tierra, que no tiene quasi nenguna semejança con los otros, mas a todos excede, y es la cosa más principal y más rica que hay en todo el Oriente; y paréscese mucho en algunas cosas con la riqueza y hartura de nuestra Europa, y en muchas le excede: y aunque conviene con los japonés quanto a la blancura, filosomya de rostro, y delicadeza de entendimiento, en todo lo demás son muy diferentes, quanto a la qualidad de la tierra, naturalezas, costumbres y modo de vivir, que parece estudiaron de propósito los unos y los otros en cómo no se conformar en nenguna cosa, antes cómo ser en todo contrarios.'

42 Let us take the example of his instructions where he writes: 'Quand V.R. ou le Père Mesquita, vous irez voir S.M., vous lui offrirez, au nom du Provincial de l'Inde, ou au nom de la Province du Japon, les paravents sur lesquels se trouve représentée la Chine. Et si cela vous semble bon, vous pourrez lire les trois chapitres qui traitent de la Chine tels qu'ils sont écrits dans l'histoire que vous emportez avec vous, de nos choses de l'Inde, en expliquant à Sa Majesté le soin qu'on a pris pour les composer, et comment, pour cela, je les ai apportés du Japon dans l'Inde, les faisant peindre ensuite en Chine; tout en a été tiré de leurs livres mêmes avec très grande peine et difficulté', see Abranches Pinto J.A. – Bernard H., "Les instructions du père Valignano pour l'ambassade japonaise en Europe", *Monumenta Nipponica* 6 (1943) 391–403, at 398. In this quotation the distinction between Moghol India, Ming China and Japan is clear, as well as their entanglements. It is no coincidence that the three chapters dedicated to China he refers to (and that are quoted in the previous footnote) are part of his biography dedicated to Francisco Xavier.

to Rome mirrored the kind of intellectual process at stake in 1585: Papal Rome received this new world in order to incorporate its place on the globe and thus strengthen its own position as a world city.

The attention paid to the concreteness of the comparability is quite sophisticated. The expression 'a living message' (*na carta viva*), used by the procurator to describe his own enterprise, reveals an attempt to abolish distances and to bridge the gap between abstract knowledge represented by the term 'message'—which also echoes the 'letters' sent from Japan and published by local printers—and concrete views and exchange. Less explicitly, it also says something about the entire trip: Not only were the living messengers sent to embody Japan for a European audience; their bodies must also document Europe for a Japanese audience. Their memories were printed on their brains, utilizing those memory exercises in which the Jesuits regularly engaged. This last point was elaborated through a 'printed message' that will be commented upon later.⁴³ Against the risk of a cultural clash—as Luís Fróis, another Jesuit living in Japan at that time, emphasized in a short text written when the embassy arrived to Rome⁴⁴—the courtly encounter was systematically promoted among people belonging to the same social rank. Valignano's detailed attention to the clothes of the travellers—colours, sizes, textile quality—reveals something about the importance of dress codes as a means of communication, and of communication itself as engaged between similar social classes rather than across distinct cultures.⁴⁵ Another element of this shared courtly culture was represented by the exchange of gifts.⁴⁶ In addition to their reciprocal dimension, generally highlighted by scholars, it should be emphasized that gifts were also key elements of knowledge circulation and complemented the project of conversion.⁴⁷ While not the case here, the gift of books and scientific instruments formed part of the exchanges between Rome and Asia in the years

43 Abranches Pinto – Bernard, "Les instructions" 400.

44 See *Traité de Luís Fróis, S.J. (1585) sur les contradictions de mœurs entre Européens & Japonais*, trans. X. de Castro, comments by R. Schrimpf and with an introduction by J.M. Garcia (Paris: 1993). The title of this text emphasizes the opposite view by explicitly pointing out the difference between the Japanese and European costumes. It had been lost for three centuries before its first publication in 1985.

45 Abranches Pinto – Bernard, "Les instructions" 395.

46 Abranches Pinto – Bernard, "Les instructions" 399.

47 Abranches Pinto – Bernard, "Les instructions" 402. For the 1640s, see Standaert N., *An Illustrated Life of Christ Presented to the Chinese Emperor: The History of Jincheng Shuxiang* (1640), Monumenta Serica 59 (Sankt Augustin: 2007).

that followed.⁴⁸ There was, however, a price to be paid by the four adolescents. They were confined to the discursive and material framework of the embassy, as they were hosted by the Jesuit colleges of the places they visited, only meeting high-ranking individuals. These constraints resulted from the mission's double operation: When in Europe the Japanese had to be encapsulated by a European worldview while back in Japan they had to become the living testimonies of Europe's *grandeur* and the splendour of Catholicism.

This last point is elucidated by *De missione legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam rebusque in Europa, ac toto itinere animadversis dialogus* (*Dialogue on the mission of the Japanese embassy to the Roman Curia and on all the things noticed in Europe and along the way*) published in Macao in 1590.⁴⁹ I only mention this edition in order to outline the complexity of the communicative operation launched by Valignano. The existence of the book expresses the intention to convey a message not only to Rome and Europe more broadly, but also to Japan. Its authorship is still in question, the fact that it was published only in Macao with no other European edition, along with its dialogical format—fictional characters stand in for the real members of the embassy, travelling from Nagasaki to Rome and then back to Japan—deserve our close attention.⁵⁰ It was probably meant for the students of the Jesuit College in Macao, and the depiction of European travels of people their own age could have served a pedagogical function. This publication is part of a literary genre where the travelogue depicts a world tour, in this case made by non-Europeans, another significant detail worthy of attention.

48 The exchange of scientific books and instruments is one of the methods used by Matteo Ricci in China, as early as the 1580s. See Romano, *Une Chine de papier*.

49 Sande Duarte de, *Dialogo sobre a missao dos embaixadores japoneses a Curia Romana*, ed. A. da Costa Ramalho (Coimbra-Lisbon: 2010); in English: *Japanese Travellers in Sixteenth Century Europe: A Dialogue Concerning the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia, 1590*, ed. and annotated with an introduction by D. Massarella, trans. by J.F. Moran (London: 2012); Jorissen E., "Exotic and 'Strange' Images of Japan in European Texts of the Early 17th century: An Interpretation of their Contexts of History of Thought and Literature", *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 4 (2002) 37–61; Massarella D., "Envoys and Illusions: The Japanese Embassy to Europe, 1582–90, 'De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium', and the Portuguese Viceregal Embassy to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 1591", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series 15 (2005) 329–350.

50 See also Bernard H., "Valignani ou Valignano, l'auteur véritable du récit de la première ambassade japonaise en Europe (1582–1590)", *Monumenta Nipponica* 1 (1938) 378–385; Proust J., *L'Europe au prisme du Japon* 119–154; *Um tratado sobre o Reino da China dos Padres Duarte Sande e Alessandro Valignano (Macao, 1590)*, ed. R.M. Loureiro (Macao: 1992).

In conclusion, I will only mention one point of interest: the global perspective it sustains. It is raised in the last chapter, 'A summary description of the whole world, and a statement as to which is its principal and noblest part'.⁵¹ There, the Japanese characters and their mentor are represented leaning over a book—more precisely, an atlas. In response to a request made by one of the boys, the mentor states:

Now that with your arrival here all the labours and difficulties of your journey are at an end, it remains for you to put before our eyes the picture of the whole of the world which we were promised in the first colloquia, and to tell us about the difference between its principal parts.⁵²

He thus adds:

That is why I had the *Theatrum Orbis* brought. You will find it a great pleasure to study the various maps in it. First of all, then, take a look at this picture, which contains a representation of the whole of the world, in which you can easily discern the five principal parts into which, as I said at the beginning, the whole globe of the world is divided, namely Europe, which was the end of our voyage, Asia, which we also reached, Africa, where we kept to one port, America, to which we have referred a number of times, and finally the unknown southern land which I said had often been seen by Portuguese sailors traveling past it.⁵³

What an amazing inverted mirror of the real world! Encompassing the world is not a matter of circulation, but of representation—it is possible thanks to the atlas, as a reading exercise. But the ambiguity of this action is suggested in the following exchange: 'I am delighted to see this picture of the world', replies the Japanese boy, 'but it is only a representation.' And when he looks

51 *Japanese Travellers* 438.

52 'Quandoquidem vestro adventu omnibus itineris laboribus difficultatibusque finis est impositum, superest, ut totius orbis terrarum formam primis colloquiis promissam nobis sub aspectum subiicias deque praecipuarum partium distinctione nos edoceas.'

53 'Ista de causa iussi afferri *Theatrum Orbis*, cuius variis figuris conspectis miram animis voluptatem haurire potestis. Ponite igitur in primis oculos in hac tabella, quae totius orbis effigiem continet, in qua discernere facile potestis quinque illas praecipuas partes, in quas principio dixi totum terrae globum distribui, nimirum Europam, qua fuit nostrae navigationis terminus, Asiam, quam etiam attigimus, Africam, cuius unum portum tenuimus, Americam, quam aliquoties retulimus, terram denique Australem ignotam, quae saepe a nautis Lusitanis praetereuntibus conspectam esse, affirmavi.'

at Japan and discovers that ‘our Japan is limited to such a small space’, he considers that the map may be wrong, and he feels ‘that finding this mistake detracts considerably from the pleasure which he had been taking in viewing this picture’. It will then be the task of his mentor to explain to him that the map is not wrong, on the basis of a paper ‘theatrum orbis’. The atlas, edited by Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598), Europe’s most important cartographer, had been offered to the real travellers while they visited Padua, one of the oldest European sites of knowledge.⁵⁴ Here, fiction and reality meet in this surprisingly evocative episode. Moreover, it offers an opportunity to think about the map as a tool to represent the real world, and the epistemological issues at stake in what may seem to us a very basic assumption—that one may rely on a map and trust that what it represents is true, and that it shows the world as it really is.

The reference to *De missione legatorum* may have led us far from Rome, but only in part, as such a production is meaningless without the Roman connection. Furthermore, this connection is a material one: The installation of a European printing press in Macao is one of the many results of the Japanese embassy. But the interest in Rome as a site of mediation is not due to the fact that it is situated at the opposite end of this itinerary. Much more significantly, it lies in its cumulative function. What arrives there from and about Japan is attuned to other pieces of knowledge arriving from elsewhere, and through other channels, conveyed by other actors and processed in other parts of the Holy City. In this specific instance, the Japanese embassy and the entire complex of knowledge produced by it coincides with the publication by González de Mendoza of the first Spanish book entirely dedicated to China. Japan and China meet in Rome, and this junction results less from a plan developed by the Roman centre of Catholicism—as a traditional diffusionist approach would suggest—than from a complex conjuncture that empowers the various resources—social, cultural, as well as political—of the site, and favours knowledge production on a global scale. The connecting power of Rome—either directly or indirectly through a series of other sites of mediation, as is the case with both Nagasaki and Macao—defines it as the site of a global system of knowledge.

54 *Japanese Travellers* 440. Berns A.D., *The Bible and Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy: Jewish and Christian Physicians in Search of Truth* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 2014) 71–108.

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Staging Genoa in Antwerp: The Triumphal Arch of the Genoese Nation for the *Blijde Inkomst* of Archduke Ernest of Austria into Antwerp, 1594

Ivo Raband

On 14 June 1594, everyday life in Antwerp came to a brief halt, when all of the city's inhabitants were ordered to welcome the new Governor-General of the Netherlands, Archduke Ernest of Austria (1553–1595) during the traditional ceremony of the *Blijde Inkomst* (Joyous Entry).¹ The city government and the foreign merchant nations utilized this sumptuous and remarkable event to present their hopes and aspirations to the new governor, and had decorated the streets and squares with large and splendid temporary constructions. The foreign merchants in particular, who formed an important part of Antwerp's economy and society, had been encouraged by the government to contribute to this lavishly executed event by commissioning their very own ephemera to publicly welcome the Habsburg prince.² In 1594, the ceremony included the merchant nations from Spain, Portugal, Genoa, Milan, Florence, Lucca, and Germany (which was represented by the Augsburg Fuggers). All seven saw the opportunity to display their virtuosity to the onlookers of the *Blijde Inkomst*, and without further ado participated with their own ephemeral triumphal arches.³

This chapter focuses on the ephemeral arch commissioned by the Genoese nation as a striking example of such participation by a foreign merchant nation in the festivities for a Joyous Entry [Figs. 2.1, 2.2]. The reasons for selecting this specific structure are twofold. First, the Genoese arch was the only one to include all three artistic media (architecture, sculpture, and painting),

1 The so-called *geboden*, issued by the city council, made participation mandatory. See the *gebod* of 13 May 1594, Museum Plantin-Moretus, *Gheboden Book* 1843, no. 311.

2 On this competitive moment of public ceremonies, see Weissert C., *Die kunstreichste Kunst der Künste: Niederländische Malerei im 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich: 2011) 18. On the inclusion of foreign merchants in this ceremony, see Cholcman T., *Art on Paper: Ephemeral Art in the Low Countries. The Triumphal Entry of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella into Antwerp, 1599* (Turnhout: 2014) 18–21, 111–132.

3 Two exceptions were the ephemera built by the nation from Lucca, a two-dimensional construction with a trompe l'oeil painting and the commission by the Fuggers, a gallery of paintings of twelve Roman and Habsburg emperors.

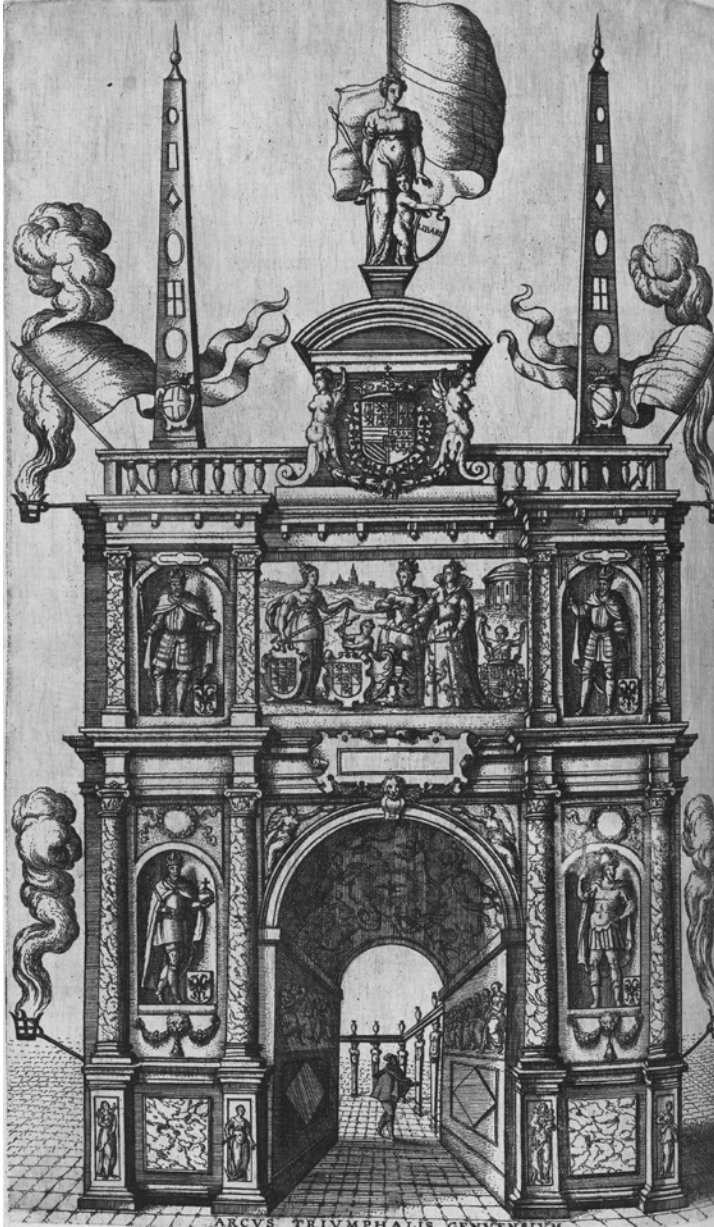


FIGURE 2.1 *Pieter van der Borcht (engraver) after Joos de Momper and Cornelis Floris (III), Front side of the arch of the Genoese nation, in Johannes Bochius, Descriptio Publicae Gratulationis Spectaculorum, et Ludorum, in Adventu Serenissimi Principis Ernesti [...] (Antwerp, Ex Officina Plantiniana: 1595). Engraving, 32.4 × 20.2 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. BI-1953-0546B-14).*

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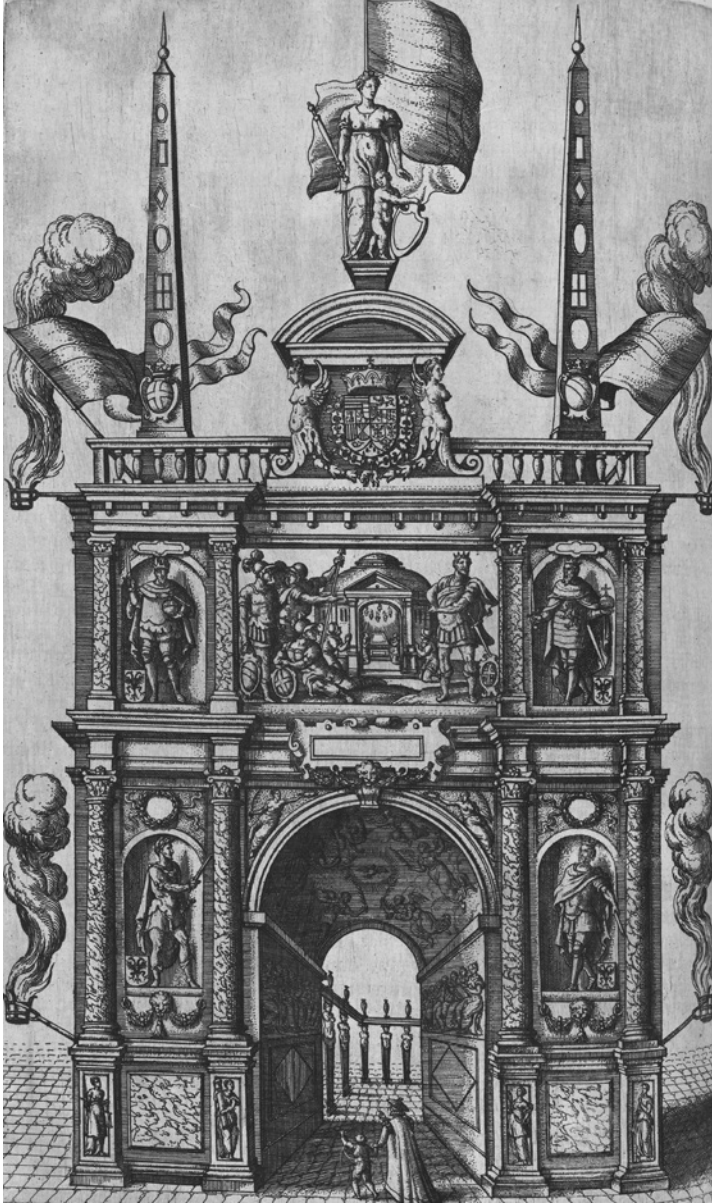


FIGURE 2.2 *Pieter van der Borcht (engraver) after Joos de Momper and Cornelis Floris (III), Back side of the arch of the Genoese nation, in Johannes Bochius, Descriptio Publicae Gratulationis Spectaculorum, et Ludorum, in Adventu Serenissimi Principis Ernesti [...]* (Antwerp, Ex Officina Plantiniana: 1595). Engraving, 32.5 × 20.2 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. BL-1953-0546B-15). IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

since it was the only “nation arch” to have large-scale paintings instead of *tableaux vivants* or sculptures as its main decoration.⁴ Second, throughout the sixteenth century, the merchants, bankers, and craftsmen from Genoa constituted the largest group of foreigners residing in Antwerp, and had thus become an integral group within Antwerp’s mercantile and cultural elite.⁵ The chapter will discuss how this successful and important group of Italians utilized this public ceremony in particular to portray themselves as an essential member of Antwerp’s elite, since ‘Antwerp’s business life [...] was dominated by the Italians, whose speech was the language of the Bourse, who monopolised the luxury textiles that provided the largest item in the commodities market, and whose advanced financial techniques set the pace for northern merchants’.⁶ In the course of the 1590s, Antwerp swiftly recovered from the decline in its markets caused by the Dutch Revolt—and which had led to the renewed but short-lived growth of Italian ports like Genoa—and once again became an important trading centre and entrepôt with a flourishing trade in art and luxury goods including furniture, tapestries, books, paintings and engravings, all kinds of fabrics and textiles (Italian silk, English wool and unfinished cloth, German ticking and ribbons), and luxury foodstuffs and commodities from other countries or continents, such as diamonds from Goa, sugar from Brazil, tropical dyes, French wine, Italian rice, and soap produced locally from Spanish olive oil.⁷ This means that by the year 1594, the members of the Genoese nation

4 This was an ongoing process, which only began in Naples in the 1530s and reached its peak a century later, when paintings had truly become the most important decoration for ephemeral structures. See Evers H.G. – Roeder-Baumbach I. von, *Versieringen bij Blijde Inkomsten: Gebruikt in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden gedurende de 16e en 17e eeuw* (Antwerp: 1943) 83; Cholcman, *Art on Paper* 18.

5 Subacchi P., “Italians in Antwerp in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century”, in Soly H. – Thijs K.L. (eds.), *Minderheden in westeuropese steden (16de–20ste eeuw)* (Turnhout: 1995) 73–90, at 78–79.

6 Subacchi, “Italians in Antwerp” 74. For a general study of Italians in Antwerp, see Subacchi, “Italians in Antwerp”; Subacchi P., “The Italian Community in 16th-century Antwerp”, in Veeckman J. – Jennings S. (eds.), *Majolica and Glass from Italy to Antwerp and Beyond: The Transfer of Technology in the 16th and Early 17th Century* (Antwerp: 2002) 23–38; Rock J. de – Puttevils J. – Stabel P., “Stranieri ad Anversa: Mercanti, commercio e luoghi commerciali”, in Calabi D. – Svalduz E. (eds.), *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa*, 6 vols. (Treviso-Costabissara: 2010) vol. 6, *Luogi, spazi, architetture* 597–616; and Puttevils J., *Merchants and Trading in the Sixteenth Century: The Golden Age of Antwerp* (London: 2015).

7 See Arblaster P., “Antwerp and Brussels as Inter-European Spaces in News Exchange”, in Dooley B.M. (ed.), *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2010) 193–205, at 200. On the short-lived growth of Genoese-based trade, see Harreld D.J., “Foreign Merchants and International Trade

in Antwerp were once again able to conduct their business within a thriving global trade system and, like all the other merchants, they were eager to seize and prolong this prosperous moment.

The extraordinary event of the *Blijde Inkomst* is also of great importance because it gave the foreign merchant nations the opportunity to present themselves publicly as members of Antwerp society. Hence, the significance of the 1594 *Blijde Inkomst* and its noteworthiness for the city of Antwerp and the foreign nations emerge from an examination of the origins of this state ritual. Its roots lay in late-medieval Netherlandish history, where this ceremonial act invested new rulers with local sovereignty. The ritual had been established by the cities of the Low Countries after Joanna, Duchess of Brabant, Lothier, and Limburg (1322–1406) had her triumphal entry into Louvain in 1356. Following this event, the Duchess granted the cities extensive privileges, which were compiled in the *Blijde Inkomst* charter.⁸ In 1549, the entry into Antwerp to welcome Emperor Charles v (1500–1558) and his son Prince Philip of Spain (1527–1598) marked an important turn for the already established stage decorations. Based on the *Triumphus* ceremonies held for Charles v in the preceding decades in Italy, the city of Antwerp created ephemeral structures based on Serlian architecture, adorned with themes derived from classical and humanist texts, partially distancing the entry from its medieval artistic tradition. The *Blijde Inkomst* had thus become an early modern spectacle involving ‘a fusion of several traditions and sources’.⁹ The Genoese nation made use of these developments by creating a structure that mediated between new artists’ knowledge, local historical traditions, and their own mercantile and political ambitions and interests.

The *Blijde Inkomst* for Philip II’s nephew Ernest of Austria held in 1594, nearly 250 years after Joanna’s entry, was especially important in light of contemporary political developments in the Netherlands. Archduke Ernest was the first member of the Habsburg dynasty to govern the Low Countries since

Networks in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries”, *Journal of European Economic History* 39 (2010) 11–31, at 12.

8 Koopmans J.W. – Thomas W., “Introduction”, in Koopmans J.W. – Thomas W. (eds.), *Propaganda en spektakel: Vroegmoderne intochten en festiviteiten in de Nederlanden* (Maastricht: 2010) 3–12.

9 See Cholman, *Art on Paper* 12–24, here 15. On the entry of 1549, see Meadow M.A., “Ritual and Civic Identity in Philip II’s 1549 ‘Blijde Incompst’”, in Falkenburg R. (ed.), *Court, State and City Ceremonies*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 49 (Zwolle: 1999) 37–67; and Bussels S., *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power: The Triumphal Entry of Prince Philip of Spain into Antwerp* (Amsterdam: 2012).

the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt (1568), the declaration of independence of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces (1581), and Alessandro Farnese's siege and capture of Antwerp (1585), and he was therefore Philip II's chosen candidate to consolidate Habsburg supremacy in the Low Countries.¹⁰ Ernest was chosen because he was a close relative who had been educated at the Spanish court (1564–1571), had governed Austria since 1576, and ardently supported the Counter-Reformation.¹¹ Philip also approved of Ernest's military success in the latest war against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary, in which he was acting leader of Rudolf II's imperial army. Aside from Philip's political aspirations for Ernest's reign, both the city of Antwerp and its foreign merchant nations had high hopes for an end to war and a renewed growth of the Antwerp market, since the historic events after 1568 and 1585 had not only shaped the history of the Habsburg rule in the Netherlands, but also resulted in important political and—in the case of Antwerp—economic changes.¹² This led to the need to display highly specific imagery during the entry. First, the organizers, led by the city secretary and humanist Johannes Bochijs (1555–1609), needed to reference the entry of 1549 to ensure that the Habsburg archduke was welcomed in a way that adequately reflected his status. Second, the

10 Recent research has discussed whether Ernest's entry could be called a *Blijde Inkomst*, since he did not swear the oath to uphold any privileges and was thus not invested with the titles of Duke of Brabant and Margrave of Antwerp, see Davidson P. – Weel A. van der, "Introduction: The Entry of Archduke Ernst into Antwerp in 1594 in Context", in Mulryne J.R. – Watanabe-O'Kelly H. – Shewring M. (eds.), *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Aldershot: 2004) vol. 1, 492–495 and Peeters N., *Frans Francken de Oude (ca. 1542–1616): Leven en werken van een Antwerps historieschilder* (Leuven: 2013) 113–114. On the eventful political history of the early modern Netherlands in general and the Joyous Entry and its political and artistic implications in particular, see Weissert, *Die kunstreichste Kunst* 12–19.

11 For a general biographical overview, see Mraz G., "Erzherzog Ernst", in Hamann B. (ed.), *Die Habsburger: Ein biographisches Lexikon* (Munich: 1988) 98–99.

12 On the economic shift in Antwerp after 1585 from the bulk-carrying trade to an economy focused on locally produced luxury goods, see Thijs A.K.L., "Antwerp's Luxury Industries: The Pursuit of Profit and Artistic Sensitivity", in Stock J. Van der, *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis 16th–17th Century*, exh. cat., Hessenhuis (Ghent: 1993) 105–113; Göttler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J., "Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp: An Introduction", in Göttler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J. (eds.), *Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 64 (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2014) 9–37; and Lesger C., *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries c. 1550–1630* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2006).

city and the resident foreign merchant nations, among them the Genoese, had to apply their very own designs and decorations to the ephemeral structures in order to display their artistic virtuosity as well as their political and mercantile interests.¹³

The Genoese Nation in Antwerp

A closer look at the history of the Genoese nation helps to clarify its situation at the end of the sixteenth century, when the dominant role of Genoese tradesmen and bankers was declining. Antwerp's Genoese nation had been active in the Low Countries—at Bruges—since the mid-fifteenth century, and it is worth noting that membership in the nation was not compulsory for merchants, bankers, or craftsmen who came to the city on the Scheldt from the Ligurian coast.¹⁴ The early modern notion of a “nation” was very different from our contemporary understanding.¹⁵ In its early modern sense, nations were guild-like groups providing ‘protection for people belonging to the community and the possibility for them to be judged according to the laws of their city of origin.’¹⁶ Moreover, nations were able to participate in public ceremonies, like the *Blijde Inkomst*, and were an important component of early modern urban society, which in Antwerp became apparent through the commercial and cultural exchange between the two cities.¹⁷ Consequently, as Donald J. Harreld

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- 13 See Thøfner M., *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonials in Antwerp and Brussels During and After the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: 2008) 180–193. On a comprehensible impact of ephemeral imagery created for a *Blijde Inkomst*, see Cholcman, *Art on Paper*.
 - 14 Not every Genoese merchant or banker saw the need to enter the nation, since the privileges awarded to the Genoese in Bruges and Antwerp applied to every merchant from Liguria and not just to members of the nation, see Harreld D.J., “The Individual Merchant and the Trading Nation in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp”, in Parker C.H. – Bentley J.H. (eds.), *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World* (Lanham, MD – Plymouth: 2007) 271–284, at 275. For a history of Genoese trade privileges in the Low Countries, see Harreld, “Foreign Merchants” 25–26.
 - 15 The correct term in German therefore remains “Lagerhausgesellschaft”, which translates to “warehouse association” and underlines the fact that “nation” did not have the same meaning we apply to it today, see Weissert, *Die kunstreichste Kunst* 18.
 - 16 Subacchi, “Italians in Antwerp” 75, note 11.
 - 17 In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Genoese nobility avidly collected paintings by Jan Massys, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, Frans Floris, and Frans Francken the Younger. Aertsen's and Beuckelaer's kitchen paintings particularly influenced Genoese painters like Bernardo Strozzi and Vincenzo Campi. On this artistic exchange between Antwerp and Genoa, see Klerck B. de, “Antwerpen en Genua: Artistieke realties

has astutely observed, in the sixteenth century the Genoese nation formed 'a social network for Genoese merchants in Antwerp, rather than an institution committed to negotiating privileges'.¹⁸

This means that all foreign merchants or craftsmen who arrived in Antwerp were immediately associated with the traits and successes of their "nation", even though they may not necessarily have wanted to be a member of that group. Many Genoese men came to Antwerp as employees and servants of richer noblemen, as agents for larger companies, as playwrights and actors, as craftsmen such as weavers, and of course artisans and artists who 'introduced new techniques and innovation to the city', such as dyeing the colour *scarlatto*, making majolica pottery, or the production of Venetian *cristallo* glass.¹⁹ Thus in 1594 the Genoese, as the largest Italian faction, were an essential part of the population of Antwerp: the merchant-bankers were the leading personnel of the New Bourse and part of the local Catholic elite, and the Genoese craftsmen applied their new artisanal techniques.

The Genoese nation did, however, distinguish itself from the other nations in one particular respect: all of its members had to belong to the Republic's high nobility, the 28 *alberghi*. This rule had been established by Andrea Doria (1466–1560) after 1528 and was applied only by the Genoese nation, which henceforth differentiated them from the nations from Spain, Portugal, Milan, Florence, Lucca, Venice, or Germany. This transformed the Genoese nation into an even more exclusive group based on 'kin networks', which successfully sought to link the Republic's nobility with its mercantile elite.²⁰ Following

in de zeventiende eeuw", in Cataldi Gallo M. – Vercruysse R. – Priarone M. – Migliaccio M. (eds.), *Anversa & Genova: Een hoogtepunt in de barockschilderkunst*, exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor de Schone Kunsten (Antwerp: 2004) 47–57.

18 Harreld, "Foreign Merchants" 26.

19 Subacchi, "Italians in Antwerp" 81–83. On dyeing *scarlatto*, which was introduced into Antwerp around 1510, see Molà L., *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, MD: 2000) 120–131, esp. 129; on majolica consumption and production in Antwerp, see Dumortier C., "La majolique anversoise: Les données historiques", in Veeckman J. – Jennings S. (eds.), *Majolica and Glass from Italy to Antwerp and Beyond: The Transfer of Technology in the 16th and Early 17th Century* (Antwerp: 2002) 39–49; as early as 1588, glass from Antwerp in the *façon de Venise* was referred to as being in the 'Antwerp manner', which underlines the importance of the production of this glass in the Netherlands. On Venetian glass in Antwerp and its introduction into the city by Jean de Lame in 1549, see Page J.-A. (ed.), *Beyond Venice: Glass in Venetian Style, 1500–1750*, exh. cat., The Corning Museum of Glass (Corning: 2004) 228–235.

20 This followed a directive from Andrea Doria, who reorganized the Genoese nobility into *alberghi* after his coup d'état (1528). See Kirk T.A., *Genoa and the Sea: Policy and Power*

Doria's political alignment with the Habsburg Empire in 1528, and after Charles v's death, the Genoese also became the main financiers and creditors of Philip II and his dynasty while at the same time ensuring the Republic's political stability by protecting it from French occupation.²¹

Despite this rather strict regulation of membership, the Genoese nation consistently remained the largest foreign trading nation in sixteenth-century Antwerp, which can be explained by the Republic's mercantile success.²² During the sixteenth century, the so-called 'age of the Genoese', the merchants from Liguria had become important exporters of high-quality fabrics such as silk and velvet, and through the money earned in this luxury trade became the main creditors to the Spanish Kingdom.²³ Unlike other foreign merchants, the Genoese had not suffered directly from the political upheaval of the 1560s in the Southern Netherlands and the subsequent changes in the Antwerp market, since Genoa soon assumed the then-vacant leading position as mediator between Atlantic and overland trade.²⁴ These aspects played an important role in the decoration of the Genoese arch in 1594, and its analysis will enable us to gain a better understanding of the Genoese economic situation.

However, in spite of this great opportunity to represent their nation with their own triumphal arch, the participation of the Genoese nation in the Joyous Entry was more than just an honour for the men from Liguria. Ever since Emperor Charles v awarded the Genoese a special trade privilege in 1532, it had been compulsory for them to take part in the entry and to pay for part of the costs.²⁵ In 1594, this unique situation among the nations must also have impelled the Genoese nation to present itself as the most valuable and important group of foreigners in the city of Antwerp.²⁶ The nation's members

in an *Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559–1684* (Baltimore, MD – London: 2005) 24–25; Epstein S.A., *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, NC: 1996) 315. On kin networks, see Harreld, "Foreign Merchants and International Trade Networks" 22.

21 A recent publication on Genoese history and its relationship to the Spanish Kingdom is Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*.

22 See Subacchi, "Italians in Antwerp" 80.

23 The term 'age of the Genoese' was coined by Fernand Braudel in the 1940s. See Braudel F., *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, CA – London: 1995) vol. 1, 500; see also Massa P., "De sociale organisatie en de economische activiteiten van de Genuezen in Antwerpen (zestiende–zeventiende eeuw)", in Cataldi Gallo – Vercruyssen – Priarone – Migliaccio, *Amversa & Genova* 18–21, at 20.

24 Harreld, "Foreign Merchants" 12.

25 Stadsarchief Antwerpen (SAA), PK 1075, *Natie van Genua*. See Harreld, "The Individual Merchant" 275 and note 17.

26 We also find this in the entry of 1549, when the arch of the Genoese, for which Frans Floris had created the paintings, was the second largest and most expensive ephemeral building

consequently saw the need to communicate to Archduke Ernest—as well as to the broader public, including the other merchant nations, the city council, and the inhabitants of Antwerp—that their nation possessed the necessary financial resources to cover part of the entry's costs and still participate with their own arch to highlight their mercantile success. This ambition to take a leading role was further emphasized by the positioning of the arch: it was the first of the four Italian arches of the entry and only the third “nation arch” in the overall sequence. This prime position of the Genoese nation had already been established in the entry for Charles V and Prince Philip in 1549, when their arch had been the second structure, surpassed only by the arch of the Spaniards [Fig. 2.3]. In 1594, however, the Genoese had reverted to third position within the order of nations, since the Portuguese arch had been granted the position immediately following the Spanish one, in deference to the joint monarchies of Spain and Portugal (since 1581).²⁷ This repositioning of the Genoese nation from second to third place did in fact coincide with the changing situation on the global market, since the Genoese role as the most important creditors to the Spanish King was increasingly being taken over by the Portuguese, who surpassed the bankers from Liguria shortly thereafter.²⁸

With regard to Antwerp's Joyous Entries and the different groups that participated in them, recent publications have pointed to the fact that this ceremony was created and conceived first and foremost as a public presentation of civic power, self-assurance, and local knowledge, especially concerning arts and crafts.²⁹ However, the role of the Italian merchant nations in these entries

in the whole ceremony, cf. Woollett A.T., *The Altarpiece in Antwerp, 1554–1615: Painting and the Militia Guilds*, Ph.D. dissertation (Columbia University: 2004) 33.

- 27 On the arch of the Portuguese in the context of that nation's trade, see Göttler C., “The Place of the ‘Exotic’ in Early Seventeenth-Century Antwerp”, in Schrader S. (ed.), *Looking East: Rubens's Encounter with Asia*, exh. cat., The J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, CA: 2013) 88–107, esp. 96.
- 28 On the rise of the Portuguese as merchant-bankers in Antwerp, see Pohl H., *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567–1648): Zur Geschichte einer Minderheit* (Wiesbaden: 1977) and for a specific example, the research conducted by Christine Göttler and Sarah Joan Moran on the Portuguese merchant-banker Emmanuel Ximenez (1564–1632) in Antwerp, see <http://ximenez.unibe.ch> (accessed: 02.08.2016).
- 29 On Ernest's entry into Antwerp, see Diels A., “Van opdracht tot veiling: Kunstaanbestedingen naar aanleiding van de Blijde Intrede van Aartshertog Ernest van Oostenrijk te Antwerpen in 1594”, *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 19 (2003) 25–54, esp. 44–53; Thøfner, *A Common Art* 180–193; Raband I. “Printed Narrative: The Festival Books for Archduke Ernest of Austria from Brussels and Antwerp, 1594/95”, in Hirakawa K. (ed.), *Aspects of the Narrative in Art History* (Kyoto: 2014) 17–32.



FIGURE 2.3

Anon. (engraver), *Triumphal arch of Emperor Titus in Rome, in Sebastiano Serlio, Il Terzo Libro Di Sebastiano Serlio Bolognese, Nel Qual Si Figvrano, E Descrivono Le Antiquita Di Roma, E Le Altre Che Sono In Italia, E Fvori De Italia* (Venice, Marcolini: 1544). Woodcut, 35.6 × 24.7 cm. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek (C 6339-8-10 FOL RES).

IMAGE ©

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has been largely overlooked until now.³⁰ Based on the prints and description of the Genoese arch and its iconographic programme in the 1595 festival book *Descriptio Publicae Gratulationis, Spectaculorum, et Ludorum, in Adventu Serenissimi Principis Ernesti* [...], we will see how this ephemeral construction was used to highlight Genoese values and present the Genoese Republic as an important ally of the city of Antwerp and the Spanish Kingdom.³¹ The Genoese nation, of which, unfortunately, no individual member can be clearly identified

30 The one publication that focuses exclusively on the Genoese in Antwerp is Massa, “De sociale organisatie”. Tamar Cholcman’s book on the entry of 1599 was the first to dedicate a separate chapter to the participation of foreign merchant nations in a Joyous Entry, see Cholcman, *Art on Paper* 111–132.

31 A summary of the connected histories of the Republic of Genoa and the Spanish Empire can be found in Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric, and Power* 138–142. The festival book is Bochijs Johannes, *Descriptio Publicae Gratulationis, Spectaculorum, et Ludorum, in Adventu Serenissimi Principis Ernesti, Austriae Archiducis, Aurei Velleris Equitis, Belgicis Provinciis à Regia Maiestate Catholica Praefecti, Anno Millesimo Quingentesimo Nonagesimo Quarto, Decimo Octavo Kal. Iulias, Aliisque Diebus Antuerpiae Editorum* (Antwerp, Ex Officina

for the year 1594, thus used this event not only to stage itself as a valuable member of Antwerp society but also, as I will argue, to respond to current trends within the global trade and their role within it.

The Design of the Genoese Arch

The Genoese nation's single-arched structure [Figs. 2.1, 2.2], built, like all the ephemeral structures, of wood, plaster, and papier-mâché, was positioned in the *Lange Klaarenstraat*, the Long Street of St. Clara, which runs parallel to Antwerp's New Bourse.³² The structure measured 21.4 metres in height, 8.4 in depths, and 10.6 in width and spanned the entire street.³³ Its architectural design followed that of classical Roman triumphal arches, namely the *Triumphal Arch of Emperor Titus* (ca. 82 AD) featured in the work of Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554) [Fig. 2.4], whose treatises had been translated into Dutch by the artist and architect Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502–1550) prior the Joyous Entry of 1549, and had set the tone for Renaissance architecture—both permanent and ephemeral—in Antwerp ever since.³⁴

Corinthian half-columns and pilasters structured the arch's two façades. On each side, four sculptures stood in niches flanking the archway and the attic zone in which the aforementioned two paintings hung. The archway was

Plantiniana: 1595). A digitalized text can be found at <http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10196380.html> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

- 32 The *Lange Klarenstraat* still exists and bears the same name. The eponymous church and monastery of St. Clara does not exist anymore. The Genoese nation's building was located in the *Hofstraat* near the Old Bourse, and despite the arch's position near the St. Clara Church, the nation's chapel was to be found in the Dominican monastery. See Rock – Puttevils – Stabel, “Stranieri ad Anversa” 603.
- 33 See Stevenson J. – Gwynne P. – Liebrechts P., “Description of the Public Thanksgiving, of the Spectacles and the Games at the Entry of the Most Serene Prince Ernst Archduke of Austria, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Prefect of the Belgian Province to His Royal Catholic Majesty on 14 June 1594, published at Antwerp some days later”, in Mulryne – Watanabe – O’Kelly – Shewring, *Europa Triumphans*, vol 1., 496–571, at 537. The measurements were calculated using 1 Antwerp foot at 28.5588 cm, following Schön J., *Die Zifferrechnung* (Bamberg – Würzburg: 1815) 318.
- 34 On the use and significance of Serlian Architecture in the Netherlands and Coecke van Aelst’s translation, see Rosenfeld M.N., *Sebastiano Serlio on Domestic Architecture* (Mineola, NY: 1996) 35–41; Meadow M.A., “Aertsen’s *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, Serlio’s Architecture and the Meaning of Location”, in Koopmans J. – Meadow M.A. – Meerhoff K. – Spies M. (eds.), *Rhetoric – Rhétoriques – Rederijkers* (Amsterdam et al.: 1995) 175–196, at 183; and Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power* 22–24, note 33.

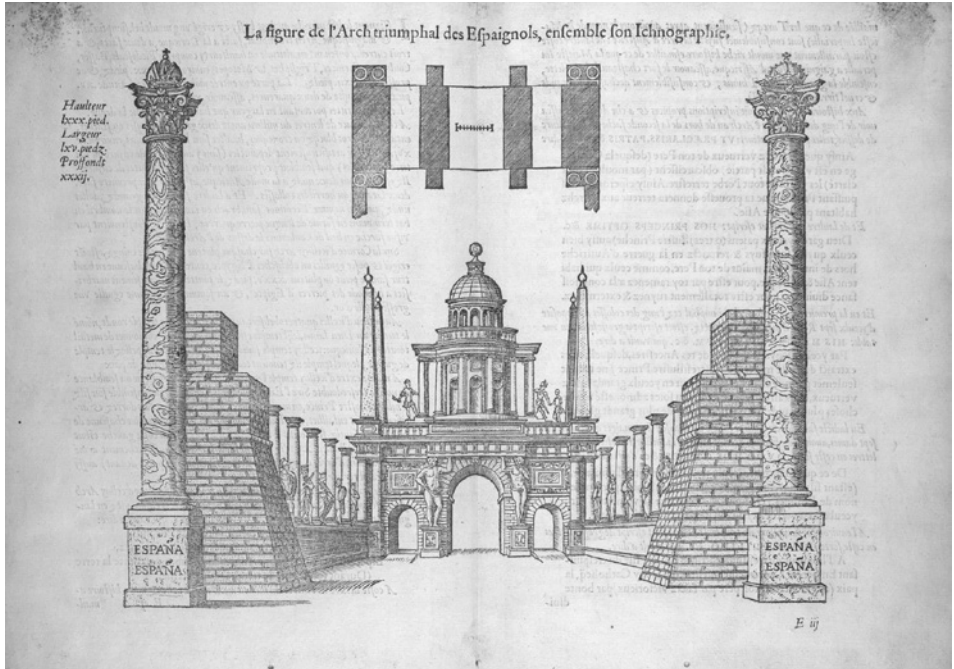


FIGURE 2.4 Pieter Coecke van Aelst (inventor and engraver), *Triumphal arch of the Spanish nation with floor plan*, in Cornelis Grapheus, *De seer wonderlijcke schoone Triumphelijke Incomptst, van den hooghmogenden Prince Philips [...]* (Antwerp, Gillis Coppens van Diest: 1550). Woodcut, 29 × 22 cm. London, The British Library (C.75.d.15).

IMAGE © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

decorated with fresco-like paintings depicting the Holy Spirit in the vault and the Seven Liberal Arts on the walls. Atop the structure, sculptures of a female allegorical figure representing *Ligutia* (Liguria) holding the Genoese flag stood on both sides. The building's four corners were adorned with obelisks seven meters in height, while 'flute-players, buglers, and trumpeters placed above the arch, playing their respective instruments' are described in the festival book but remain invisible in the print.³⁵

35 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, "Description of the Public Thanksgiving" 541. See also Ramakers B., "Ferdinand's Triumph and the Vernacular Dramatic Tradition", in Knaap A.C. – Putnam M.C.J. (eds.), *Art, Music and Spectacle in the Age of Rubens: The Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi* (London: 2013) 67–93 and Grijp L.P., "Music Performed in the Triumphal Entry of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand into Antwerp (1635)", in Knaap – Putnam, *Art, Music and Spectacle* 95–113, esp. 101–104.

The eight niche sculptures were larger-than-life figures of Roman kings and Holy Roman emperors carefully chosen for their connections with and importance for Genoa in both the recent past and the Middle Ages. Emperors Charles v (1500–1588), Maximilian II (1527–1576), Maximilian I (1459–1519), and Henry v (ca. 1081–1125) were positioned on the front façade, each bearing an inscription that assigned them distinct qualities: Charles was the ‘triumphant’, Maximilian II the ‘peacemaking’, Maximilian I the ‘bravest’, and the non-Habsburg but Salian Henry the ‘wisest’ emperor.³⁶ Sculptures of Charlemagne (742–814), ‘the founder of the empire in Germany’, Henry VII (ca. 1275–1313), Frederick I (1122–1190), and Conrad II (990–1039), who had granted Genoa its minting rights, decorated the rear façade.³⁷ This strong reference to kings and emperors who all had played a pivotal role within Genoese politics visibly linked the history of the city to the century-long history of the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands. The fact that the front façade featured three Habsburg emperors, among them Charles v, confirmed and monumentalized the Republic’s continuing alliance since 1528, the year when Andrea Doria switched allegiance from the King of France to Emperor Charles v and became Genoa’s political leader. Above these sculptures were the four especially constructed hollow obelisks with ‘twenty-four lamps [...] hanging in cavities in them, oil having been poured into the glass bowls, and the wicks set alight, gleaming through little windows of multi-coloured glass’.³⁸ The faint light radiating from the obelisks must have made the sculptures appear to be alive, especially in the twilight in which the triumphal entry of Archduke Ernest took place.³⁹

The origin of this prominent use of the sculptures and obelisks can be traced back to one specific ephemera: The Spanish arch constructed for the aforementioned entry of Charles v and Prince Philip into Antwerp in 1549. The print of the large structure [Fig. 2.3] was published in the accompanying festival book written by Cornelis Grapheus (1482–1558). The construction consisted of the two Herculean pillars in front of a gallery in which sculptures

36 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, “Description of the Public Thanksgiving” 539.

37 The text of the festival book provides further information on each of the men presented here and highlights their connection to Genoese history. For the full description, see Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, “Description of the Public Thanksgiving” 541.

38 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, “Description of the Public Thanksgiving” 539, 541. On the meaning of obelisks in Renaissance architecture in general and in Antwerp in particular, see Bevers H., *Das Rathaus von Antwerpen, 1561–1565: Architektur und Figurenprogramm*, Studien zur Kunstgeschichte 28 (Hildesheim: 1985) 79–81.

39 On this notion of lifelikeness in ephemeral sculptures during a Joyous Entry, see Eck C. van, “Animation and Petrification in Rubens’s *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*”, in Knaap – Putnam, *Art, Music and Spectacle* 143–165.

of Spanish kings and virtues had been placed. At its end a round Janus Temple was set atop a tripartite arch. At the four corners of the temple stood obelisks crowned with golden spheres.⁴⁰ This clear referencing of the Spanish arch of 1549 in the Genoese one of 1594 should be considered in the light of the events of 1528 and the subsequent entanglement of the Republic with the Spanish Kingdom. By referring strongly to the decorations on the Spanish arch, the Genoese nation visually underlined their political and economic alignment with Spain, emphasizing their membership in the Catholic mercantile and learned elite of sixteenth-century Europe and Antwerp.⁴¹

The most striking and indeed unique features of the Genoese arch, which distinguished it from the Spanish arch of 1549 and the other “nation arches” of 1594, were the two paintings [Figs. 2.5, 2.6] that were used to directly address



FIGURE 2.5 Detail of Fig. 2.1: Central painting with Belgica, Austria, and Hispania.

- 40 Grapheus Cornelis, *Le triumphe d'Anuers, fait en la suscepcion du Prince Philips, Prince d'Espaign[e]* (Antwerp, P. de Lens: 1550) E ii (38). For a full description of the Spanish arch and its meaning, see Kuyper W., *The Triumphant Entry of Renaissance Architecture into the Netherlands: The Joyeuse Entrée of Philip of Spain into Antwerp in 1549, Renaissance and Mannerist Architecture in the Low Countries from 1530 to 1630*, 2 vols. (Aalphen aan den Rijn: 1994) vol. 1, 44–49. The central place of obelisks as decoration was later picked up by Cornelis Floris de Vriendt (1514–1575) for his design of the façade of Antwerp's town hall, turning it into a perpetual triumphal arch awaiting a new arrival of Philip II in Antwerp, cf. Bevers, *Das Rathaus von Antwerpen* 30–34 and 87–92.
- 41 On the political inflections between the Republic of Genoa and the Habsburg Empire/the Spanish Kingdom, see Pacini A., “Genoa and Charles V”, in Blockmans W. – Mout N. (eds.), *The World of Emperor Charles V* (Amsterdam: 2004) 161–199, esp. 164–167 and 180–185; and Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea* 46–50.



FIGURE 2.6 Detail of Fig. 2.2: Central painting with King Baldwin of Jerusalem.

the archduke and other onlookers.⁴² In addition, the painted canvases transcended the building's status as a wholly "ephemeral" structure, transforming the nation's messages into trans-temporal statements.⁴³ According to the festival book, the two large canvases—approximately 2.9 metres in height and 4 in width—depicted three 'nymphs most beautiful in shape and form' set in a landscape before a city—most likely Antwerp, with its prominent church tower—on the first façade, and a Janus Temple to the right, yet again referencing the Spanish arch of 1549. The woman farthest to the right wears an elaborate dress with a bodice and skirt, a high ruffled lace collar, and a crown and holds a sceptre in her left hand. With the coat of arms of King Philip II of Spain placed at her feet, the person we see here must be understood as a personification of *Hispania* (Spain). Special emphasis was placed on the embroidery of her skirt, which is unfortunately barely visible in the print. The festival book describes it as adorned with 'the four parts of the earth woven in her clothes,' in the form of animals such as a camel and a lion, which are identifiable on

42 Ann Diels has proposed that the painter Marten de Vos (1532–1603) and his workshop should be considered the creators of these paintings, arguing that De Vos created prints with similar conceptions and featuring similar personae, a theory that cannot be verified by the existing archival sources, see Diels, "Van opdracht tot veiling" 49–50, also note 87.

43 We know that the paintings of the civic arches were later stored and exhibited in Antwerp Town Hall, and can thus assume that the same procedure applied to the paintings of the Genoese arch in the nation's building in the Hofstraat, see Peeters, *Frans Francken de Oude* 120–121.

her skirt. Thus, the Genoese presented Spain as the rightful ruler over all four continents (i.e. Africa, America, Asia, and Europe), acknowledging Philip II's globe-spanning reign.⁴⁴

Next to *Hispania* stands *Austria*, similarly dressed and also holding a sceptre. She is identifiable as a representation of the Empire by the imperial crown and the Habsburg eagle 'painted on the hem of her dress'.⁴⁵ The third woman, a representation of *Belgica* (Belgium), wears a gown fashioned of layered silk, and in lieu of a crown a headdress shaped like a town, which was a common iconographic motif for personifications of *Belgica* or *Antverpia*.⁴⁶ The skirt of her garment is adorned with images of the Seven Liberal Arts, a feature unfortunately completely invisible in the print. This peculiar motif described in the text shows, however, that the Genoese clearly identified Belgium—or perhaps more specifically Antwerp—as the home of the arts and crafts. Of special interest are also the two coats of arms positioned in front of her. *Belgica* holds the shields with two ribbons, intertwines them in her left hand, and presents one entangled cord to *Austria*, who then passes it along to *Hispania*. These two coats of arms show the ten Southern, Spanish ruled, Provinces on the left, and the seven Northern Provinces on the right, which suggests that the depicted scene shows an allegorical handing over of the (newly) United Seventeen Provinces to *Austria*, here referring to Archduke Ernest, who would then pass the reunified country on to Spain.

An altogether different iconography was chosen for the painting on the rear façade [Fig. 2.6]. A large circular building is positioned at the centre of the image, while the right-hand side is dominated by a crowned male figure in Roman armour, with four additional armoured men on the left-hand side.⁴⁷

44 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, "Description of the Public Thanksgiving" 537. The Genoese were presumably also trying to respond to the arch of the Portuguese nation, which was shortly before their own on the route of the entry. The Portuguese arch took its very own approach to presenting the combined Spanish-Portuguese reign and trade as spanning the globe, since they had chosen sculptures of female personifications to represent the far-away countries in which they conducted trade (Ethiopia, Mauretania, Brazil, India) on the front façade. On this arch, see Göttler, "The Place of the 'Exotic'" 96.

45 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, "Description of the Public Thanksgiving" 537.

46 This can also be seen in Abraham Janssen's 1608/09 painting depicting *Antverpia* with the mural crown next to *Scaldis*, which was exhibited in Antwerp Town Hall. See Długańczyk M., *Der Waffenstillstand (1609–1621) als Medienereignis: Politische Bildpropaganda in den Niederlanden* (Münster: 2005) 186–190. Historically, the iconography stems from antique depictions of the goddess Cybele.

47 Ann Diels compares this painting to Marten de Vos's print of Pax, Solomon, and Numa, the last figure being fashioned similarly to the man on the right side of the painting on the arch, see Diels, "Van opdracht tot veiling" 50; a digitalized image of the print can be found

The description in the festival book helps us to understand the full meaning of this scene. The text identifies the man on the right as Baldwin, i.e., King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (1058–1118), in front of ‘the most Holy Sepulchre of the Saviour, in which these words [...] were visible: the very powerful protection of the people of Genoa’.⁴⁸ The meaning of this peculiar inscription inside Christ’s final resting place is then clarified: ‘when Jerusalem was taken by storm in the year 1100 [...] the glory of the whole victory was especially attributed to the help of the Genoese. [...] Baldwin, so that he should show them thanks [...] offered them a third of the plunder from the captured cities, and a fair share of the maritime tolls, many towns and generous tax exemptions’.⁴⁹ How these two paintings, with their distinctive—and at first glance unrelated—settings, refer to the situation of members of the Genoese nation, their hopes and aspirations for the reign of the archduke, and the broader economic interests of the Republic of Genoa, will be discussed in what follows.

Velvet and Values

In the economic situation of the 1590s it had become all the more important for members of the Genoese nation to present themselves as important merchants and prosperous bankers who strove to maintain their prime position in the city’s economy. Thus, ‘contributing to the festivities [the Joyous Entries] was their way of confirming before a large audience that their role in Antwerp was of vital importance and that they made a significant contribution to the city’s prosperity’.⁵⁰ Consequently, we must assume that the nation’s members chose the details of their arch’s decoration strategically, and that they specifically intended the two paintings to become the main visual attractions of their commission for this public event, which we should consider ‘a primary transmitter of values’.⁵¹

at <http://www.virtuelles-kupferstichkabinett.de/zoomed.php?signatur=6994> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

48 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, “Description of the Public Thanksgiving” 541.

49 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, “Description of the Public Thanksgiving” 541.

50 This is also apparent for the arch that the Genoese built for the entry of Prince Philip and Charles V (1549), where their contribution was the most expensive construction due to the large number of artists and carpenters involved; the largest arch, however, was built by the Florentine nation, see Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power* 97 and 180.

51 Göttler – Ramakers – Woodall, “Trading Values” 20. The authors use this term to refer to the rhetorician plays in Antwerp and their public presentations. I argue that this concept can also be applied to the public ceremony of the Joyous Entry.

Through the peculiar topic of the painting on the arch's rear façade, members of the Genoese nation thus reminded everyone that their forefathers had facilitated the difficult task of capturing Jerusalem. Given the political situation of the Netherlands in 1594, this image became a reference to the ongoing (religious) war against the Northern Provinces as well as to the desire for peace in order to regain contact with further trading partners. The underlying proposition was that with the help of the Genoese—or more precisely with their loans to the Spanish Crown—Archduke Ernest would be just as victorious as Baldwin had been in 1100, and would conquer the disloyal and heretical provinces. But as successful and well-trained Catholic men of commerce, the nation's members did not neglect to include their desired recompense for this endeavour: as 500 years before, they hoped to be thanked with 'plunder, [...] a fair share [...], and generous tax exemptions' to boost their own trade.⁵² It is, then, their commodity trade in particular that the other painting on the façade addressed, since one of their most lucrative businesses was the trade in high-quality, luxury fabrics. After all, Antwerp had become 'the sales centre for Italian goods and raw materials, such as silk and gold thread, which found an important market in the expanding luxury industries in the Netherlands'.⁵³

Hence the painting on the front façade, with its lavishly embroidered and painted dresses, must be understood as a clear reference to the high-quality luxury fabrics that were traded chiefly via Genoese companies, and on which the Republic's wealth was based.⁵⁴ Lodovico Guicciardini (1521–1589) had already emphasized the importance of the trade in textiles in his famous description of the Low Countries, first published in Antwerp in 1566.⁵⁵ There, Guicciardini included a detailed record of the Genoese trade.⁵⁶ His description reads:

52 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, "Description of the Public Thanksgiving" 541.

53 Subacchi, "Italians in Antwerp" 74. It was common to bestow special privileges of trade and jurisdiction on the foreign nations, see Pacini, "Genoa and Charles V" 166–167, 180–185.

54 On the entanglement of Genoa's noble and mercantile elite, see Subacchi, "Italians in Antwerp" 86.

55 A revised edition was published in 1588. On the changes made there, see Deys H. – Franssen M. – Hezik V. van – Raa F. te – Walsmit E. (eds.), *Guicciardini Illustratus: De Kaarten en prenten in Lodovico Guicciardini's "Beschrijving van de Nederlanden"*, Utrecht Studies in the History of Cartography 2 ('t Goy-Houten: 2001) 46–49.

56 Guicciardini Lodovico, *Descrittione di Lodovico Guicciardini patritio fiorentino di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore* (Antwerp, Christofano Plantino: 1588). Even though Guicciardini edited the 1588 version and had images altered to reflect the political changes of 1585, the description of the Genoese trade remained the same as in the first printing of 1567.

Da Genova mandano quantità maravigliosa di velluti di piu pregi, li migliori & meglio fatti, che ci vengano, & che si facciano: mandanci bonissimi rasi, ermisini, & alter forte di drappi; & medesimamente di la viene il corallo, l'eccellente mitridatico & l'utriaca. Al loro si mádano pánine di quelle d'Inghilterra, & di queste di qua, saie, mezze ostate, telerie, tappezzerie, mercerie, & masseritie da casa.

From Genoa they send great amounts of velvet of great quality, the best & the best fashioned, coming from & manufactured there: good satin, taffeta, & other fine stuffs, & from there also comes coral, excellent mithridate and theriac. Bread is sent to them from England, & also serge, linsey-woolsey cloth, drapes, upholstery, haberdasheries, and household goods.⁵⁷

Guicciardini informs his readers that the Genoese trade focused on high-quality fabrics such as velvet (*velluti*), satin (*rasi*), and taffeta (*ermisini*), an observation supported by recent research.⁵⁸ Hence the commodities coming to Antwerp from Genoa must be understood as an important part of Antwerp's trade in luxury goods, supplying the city's merchants and craftsmen—and consequently their European customers—with highly desirable, sumptuous fabrics for the production of the high-quality clothing worn by the early modern nobility.⁵⁹

In this context, the iconography of the painting on the front façade appears in a different light: the elaborately fashioned dresses of the three women could not have been produced without velvet, satin, and taffeta from Genoa. Thus the Genoese nation used this painting to advertise their main commodity, while at the same time referring to the virtuoso craftsmanship that was

57 Guicciardini, *Descrittione* 163, translation by the author. On the Genoese import of coral, see Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen* 209. For the need of the Italian cities for northern European wheat and bread, see Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen* 148. For saie/serges, see Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* 179–180, 183. On theriac, see Leonhard K., *Bildfelder: Stilleben und Naturstücke im 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: 2013) 194–203.

58 See http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/velv/hd_velv.htm (accessed: 02.08.2016). For an in-depth study focusing on one particular Genoese merchant family, the Brignole, and their trade in high-quality velvet in Antwerp in the middle of the sixteenth century, see Russel C.I., *The Brignole: Family and Personal Relationships, Networks and the Conservation of Trust in el siglo de los genoveses, 1514–1640*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of California Los Angeles: 2002).

59 On Antwerp's changed but flourishing luxury trade after 1585, see Thijs, "Antwerp's Luxury Industries" 111–112.

required to transform these raw materials into dresses with elaborate embellishments. This interrelationship between Genoese fabrics and local knowledge was highlighted in the difference between the skirt of *Hispania*, which had been embroidered with animal figures, and those of *Austria* and *Belgica*, whose hems had been decorated with painted figures. The accurate description in the festival book suggests that the distinction between painted and embroidered fabric must have been visible in the original painting. This turns the Genoese fabric into a universal “canvas” for local fashion and design, while at the same time underlining the importance of the entanglement between the Republic of Genoa and Antwerp, since only their joint virtues (trade, materials, and knowledge) made such lavish and luxurious objects possible. The painted canvas itself sustained this notion, since it enabled the nation to present onlookers with a realistic representation of shimmering and light-reflecting velvet, something that could be achieved only in the medium of painting, an effect for which Antwerp painters were especially renowned in the sixteenth century.⁶⁰

What we see here is a moment of mediation between the desire for a political and religious reunification of the Netherlands—represented by the victorious Baldwin and the intertwined cords handed to *Austria*—and the Genoese trade, that is, the Genoese fabric used in the dresses. The painting thus needs to be understood within the broader framework of Genoese mercantile history. In the decoration of its arch, the nation hence staged itself publicly as an important member of the European trade network, since the trade in velvet had contributed to the Republic’s wealth. In conclusion, the two paintings can be described as mediators among the mercantile interests, political allegiances, shared values, and artistic crafts. This procedure underlines the Genoese nation’s careful choice of imagery for their arch and their understanding of the importance of this temporary structure in the entry of 1594.

60 On the outstanding painting skills that Karel van Mander referred to as ‘reflexy const’, see Göttler C., “‘Bootsicheyt’: Malerei, Mythologie und Alchemie im Antwerpen des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts: Zu Rubens’ Silen in der Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Wien”, in Rosen V. von (ed.), *Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den Künsten der Frühen Neuzeit*, *culturae* 4 (Wiesbaden: 2012) 259–301, at 293; and Dupré S., “The Historiography of Perspective and *reflexy-const* in Netherlandish Art”, in Jorink E. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Art and Science in the Early Modern Netherlands*, *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 61 (Zwolle: 2011) 35–60, esp. 50–55.

Conclusion

When Archduke Ernest entered the city of Antwerp in the summer of 1594, ‘awaited with everyone’s prayers’, he was greeted with a public ceremony doubtless designed to go down in the history as a grand event.⁶¹ Due to political and economic changes in the Southern Netherlands, the inhabitants of Antwerp—locals and foreigners alike—had set their hopes and expectations on the Habsburg prince. As a result, the ephemeral structures commissioned for this event became the mouthpieces of the city’s elite.⁶² As for Antwerp’s magistrate, they used the traditional *Blijde Inkomst* to present the new Governor-General with an array of arches, stages, floats, and plays all alluding to a restoration of the Netherlands under Spanish rule that enabled Antwerp to recover its former glory. In addition to this civic presentation of local pride and self-confidence, the foreign trading nations had been invited to present their very own ephemera to Archduke Ernest and the wider audience for the event. Among them, the arch of the Genoese nation—with its classical Roman design, sculptures, illuminated obelisks, musicians, and two large paintings—was an elaborate and exceptional structure with a very well conceived iconography that mediated between the historical and commercial connections among Antwerp, Genoa, and the Habsburg realms. Thus, the Antwerp resident merchant-bankers from Liguria had conceived this structure to demonstrate how profoundly their nation and the Republic of Genoa were intertwined with the historical, political, and economic affairs of the city they lived in.

Used by the Genoese as the main decorative feature of their arch, the two central paintings in particular conveyed to every onlooker that the Genoese knew how to stage themselves as important members of Antwerp’s commercial community and learned elite.⁶³ They utilized the painting on the front façade to underscore the archduke’s duty to restore peace in the Low Countries, home of the Seven Liberal Arts, and to let Belgium regain its preeminent position within the global trade of the Spanish Kingdom. On the rear façade, Genoa presented itself as a faithful historic partner to the Empire, and thus Spain, willing to assist with the unification of the Seventeen Provinces under the rule of the Catholic King Philip II. This reference to the centuries-old partnership between Genoa, the Habsburgs, and the Empire must also be understood as a commentary on the rise of the Portuguese merchants who aimed to surpass the Genoese as the main creditors to the Spanish Kingdom: before

61 Stevenson – Gwynne – Liebrechts, “Description of the Public Thanksgiving” 503.

62 Cf. Davidson – Weel, “Introduction” 492.

63 For the metaphor of the stage as a means to describe social relationships see the contributions of Benedikt Bego-Ghina and Michael Schaffner in this volume.

Archduke Ernest, his entourage, and the other merchants, among them the Portuguese nation, the Genoese made it very clear that (only) their historical allegiance to the Habsburgs would prove fruitful for all future endeavours in the Low Countries. This consequently supports the thesis that the Genoese merchants and bankers were anxious to prolong their prosperous 'century of the Genoese' at a time when the Portuguese were gradually becoming important financial partners of the Spanish Kingdom.⁶⁴

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that the art historical analysis of the Genoese arch offers access to a more profound understanding of the connections among the Republic of Genoa, Antwerp, and the Habsburg dynasty at the end of the sixteenth century. The staging and presentation of the Genoese nation reveals that the *Blijde Inkomst* of 1594 was effectively more than just a presentation of the city's self-assurance. It was, instead, an ambiguous ceremony in which civic authorities, merchant nations, artists, and the Habsburgs were intricately entangled. Clearly, the Genoese nation fully understood the potential of this event for public self-representation before a large and important audience, and they used their ephemeral arch to dramatize their interests in trade, politics, and art. The triumphal arch created by the Genoese nation must therefore be understood as a multi-layered site of mediation.

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64 Aliverti M.I., "Visits to Genoa: The Printed Sources", in Mulryne – Watanabe-O'Kelly – Shewring, *Europa Triumphans* vol. 1, 222–235, at 222. On the rise of the Portuguese merchants and further literature, see Göttler C., "The Ximenez Family in Antwerp, Lisbon, Florence, and the Wider World", in Dupré S. – Göttler C. – Moran S.J. (eds.), *Reading the Inventory: The Possessions of the Portuguese Merchant-Banker Emmanuel Ximenez (1564–1632) in Antwerp* at <http://ximenez.unibe.ch/historical/> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

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Setting the Stage for Oneself and Others: Venice and the Levant in the Fifteenth Century

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Historians have been paying increasing attention in recent years to contacts and exchanges across cultural boundaries. In the fifteenth century, one area characterized by the high interconnectedness between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice was the Eastern Mediterranean. Since the eleventh century, if not before, the Levant belonged firmly to the realm of experiences of the Venetians. Having started out as traders in the emporium that was Constantinople, the Venetians established themselves as a regional power through their territorial possessions in the *stato da mar*, which consisted mostly of islands in the Aegean Sea and towns on the Morea. Hence they came into contact early on with the Ottomans, who emerged as the dominant power in the region in the fourteenth century, after conquering large parts of the Byzantine Empire on both sides of the Bosphorus. Soon the Venetians and Ottomans were linked in numerous commercial, cultural, and diplomatic ways. In the fifteenth century, the Ottoman expansion even made them neighbours, with direct borders in the Balkans and on the Morea, and there was high mobility between the two empires on all levels of society.¹ Apart from direct interactions, Venice participated in the extensive inner-Christian discourse about the Ottomans and their origins among humanist scholars, which in part continued and reworked existing medieval themes. Moreover, a great number of visual representations testify to the essential role of the East for the Venetian self-image.² Yet these imaginary perceptions did not necessarily

1 Cf. Cavaciocchi S. (ed.), *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico secc. XIII–XVIII* (Varese: 2007); Dursteler E.R., *Venetians in Constantinople* (Baltimore, MD: 2006); and Rothman N., *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: 2011).

2 Bisaha N., *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia, PA: 2004); Carboni S. (ed.), *Venice and the Islamic World 828–1797* (New York, NY: 2007); Howard D., *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (New York, NY: 2000); Meserve M., *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA – London: 2008); Soykut M., *Italian Perceptions of the Ottomans: Conflict and Politics through Pontifical and Venetian Sources* (Frankfurt am Main:

constitute a viable fundament for political relations with the High Porte, relations that scholars have often described as based—at least on the Venetian side—on a pragmatic attitude toward the powerful Muslim empire in which ideological concerns played a minor role.³ However, we do not know how perceptions of the Levant and the Ottoman Empire were influenced by those who travelled there and reported their experiences to Venice.

One of the many Venetians to spend considerable amount of time abroad was Bartolomeo Minio (1428–1518), a Venetian patrician who served in the *stato da mar* as governor of the colony of Nauplion (present-day Nafplio). During his stay he reported extensively to the Signoria, the central organ of the Venetian government consisting of the doge, the small council, and the heads of the *Quarantia*. In his dispatches he describes not only his own experiences and occurrences in the colonies, but—most interestingly for a historical analysis of the ways in which the Ottomans and transcultural encounters were perceived—his meetings with various Ottoman officials as well. As serial reports written soon after ongoing events, the *dispacci* allow insights into the processes of Venetian-Ottoman contacts in the colonies. Yet, since the reporting governor was not merely an observer but an active participant, we need to take into consideration the major role played by his urge to explain and justify his own behaviour to the institution on which he depended. Hence, this chapter will analyze how the writing governor consciously set the stage for himself, his actions and decisions by employing certain rhetorical strategies in order to achieve certain objectives.

Writing for One's Own Career

Before analyzing the contents of the *dispacci*, some reflections on the characteristics of this genre are necessary. Written by diplomats and administrators, *dispacci* served above all practical purposes. In this they differ considerably from itinerary accounts by one-time travellers to the Levant. Instead of extensive descriptions of the region and its people written to satisfy ethnographic curiosity, they report unforeseen occurrences or *novità*.⁴ They therefore follow

2011); Valensi L., *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte* (Ithaca, NY: 1993). See also Nicolai Kölmel's chapter in this volume.

3 Pedani M.P., "Oltre la retorica: Il pragmatismo veneziano di fronte all'Islam", in Garcia Arenal M. – Heyberger B. – Vismara P. (eds.), *L'Islam visto da Occidente: Cultura e religione del Seicento europeo di fronte all'Islam* (Milan: 2009) 171–185.

4 Höfert A., *Den Feind beschreiben: 'Türkengefahr' und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600* (Frankfurt am Main – New York, NY: 2003).

different patterns of representation and rely heavily on existing knowledge or at least commonly held views about the Levant and its inhabitants among their audience. In addition, they include everyday concerns like requests for materials, money or instructions, and offer accounts of on-going affairs without much revision. Thus they also contain news that turned out to be inaccurate or irrelevant and proposals that never came to fruition.⁵

Since this chapter is concerned with Ottoman encounters, it is worth exploring another type of source that has been consulted in these matters, such as the well-known *relazioni*. Ambassadors of the Republic to foreign courts gave these accounts of their missions orally in the form of a speech to the Senate or *Collegio* after their return, and were required to deposit a written copy in the Republic's secret archives. The topics were often similar and in fact the ambassadors also wrote *dispacci* during their stay. Still, there are crucial differences in disposition and form. Unlike the *dispacci*, the *relazioni* report the course of concluded missions, usually spanning several months. While the *dispacci* are basically letters, the *relazioni* were presented in rhetorically elaborate form to a large audience and, in spite of their nominal secrecy, were soon distributed widely in manuscript and print throughout Europe. The audience of the *dispacci*, while exceeding their nominal addressees, was more limited. Nonetheless the records of the Senate contain ample indication that the senators responded in detail to certain *dispacci*, which must have been read to them beforehand. What is more, they even show up occasionally in the *diarii* of the day, evidence that they circulated beyond the Doge's Palace.⁶ While most historians see the *relazioni* as a uniquely Venetian genre and accord them great importance, especially as sources on the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, the genre of the *dispacci* has so far attracted much less scholarly attention.⁷

5 For an overview of the characteristics and existing collections, see Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Dispacci degli Ambasciatori al Senato: Indice* (Rome: 1959).

6 Examples can be found especially in the *diarii* of Marino Sanuto, which span the years 1496–1533, and the *Annali Veneti* by Domenico Malipiero, which cover the years 1457–1500. See also Neerfeld C. 'Historia per Forma di Diaria': *La cronachistica veneziana contemporanea a cavallo tra il Quattro e il Cinquecento* (Venice: 2006) 150–152; Queller D.E., "The Development of Ambassadorial *Relazioni*", in Hale J.R., *Renaissance Venice* (London: 1973) 174–196, at 189 note 1; Baschet A., *Les archives de Venise: Histoire de la Chancellerie secrète* (Paris: 1870) 274–276.

7 Benzoni G., "Ranke's Favorite Source: The Venetian *Relazioni*. Impressions with Allusions to Later Historiography", in Iggers G. – Powell J. (eds.), *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse, NY: 1990) 45–57. For some recent editions of *dispacci* for the Venetian Ottoman context, see Dario Giovanni, *22 Dispacci da Costantinopoli al Doge Giovanni Mocenigo*, ed. and trans. G. Calò (Venice: 1996); Minio Bartolomeo, *The Greek*

Despite the differences, some conclusions gained from studying the *relazioni* can be transferred to the *dispacci*. Scholars long regarded the *relazioni* as objective sources, even going so far as to believe they must have been highly accurate for the Serenissima to base foreign policy on them.⁸ In more recent research, however, their subjective quality is widely acknowledged. On a political level, they allowed the writer implicitly to take a position in the covert conflicts between Senate factions while on a personal level they were meant to augment the returning ambassador's status among his peers and further propel his ambitions—a by no means trivial factor given the lack of financial profit to be made from most missions. The elected ambassador generally even had to raise the funds for his own missions, making them desirable mainly for reasons of prestige and their quality as stepping stones to higher, more profitable offices.⁹ The importance of the opportunity given to ambassadors to present themselves on a large stage should not be underestimated, although this occurred in a fairly subtle form. It has been noted, for instance, that the ambassadors did not attempt to prove their own worth by overtly revelling in their expertise and achievements. Self-praise had to conform to the predominant republican language of service in Venice. This was achieved, for instance, by exalting one's dedication to the Venetian cause over one's skills. More than their own ingenuity, ambassadors stressed the strains that their missions placed upon them and the hassles they endured in serving the Republic,¹⁰ an observation that holds true for the *dispacci* as well.

The personal ambitions of the governors of the *stato da mar* are also evident in the *dispacci*, albeit on a smaller scale. Unsurprisingly, we should not expect self-incriminatory reports to the institution to which they were responsible, since in fact it was not uncommon for Venetians who served in the *stato da mar* to be held accountable for occurrences in the colonies after their return.¹¹ Appointments in the *stato da mar* lasted two years and were thus, like most offices of the Venetian Republic, characterized by a quick turnover of personnel. Patrician aspirants to these offices frequently had to take measures to ensure

Correspondence of Bartolomeo Minio, ed. and trans. D.G. Wright and J.R. Melville-Jones, 2 vols. (Padua: 2008–2015).

8 Dursteler E.R., "Describing or Distorting the 'Turk'? The *Relazioni* of the Venetian Ambassadors in Constantinople as Historical Source", in *Acta Histriae* 19 (2011) 231–248.

9 Vivo F. de, "How to Read Venetian *Relazioni*", in *Renaissance and Reformation* 34 (2011) 25–58.

10 Vivo, "Venetian *Relazioni*" 40.

11 O'Connell M., *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore, MD: 2009) 119–120.

further employment elsewhere.¹² Thus the *dispacci*, like the *relazioni*, should be regarded as a means to sharpen the writer's profile, rendering them anything but objective.

Reporting from the Colonies

Mary Louise Pratt's notion of contact zones proved useful for an analysis of the meetings between Bartolomeo Minio and his Ottoman counterparts, which he covers extensively in his *dispacci*.¹³ Although this case does not conform perfectly to Pratt's parameters, the Venetians and their Ottoman counterparts each constituted themselves in relation to the other. Despite different cultural origins and practices, they reached an understanding of the immediate situation in interaction with one another. The decisive moment for this study is the way in which the governor drew on the notions and values of the Republic when writing back home about events in the Venetian overseas possessions, making the *dispacci* sites of mediation—between different cultures, interests, and ambitions.

We can safely assume that these encounters between the Venetians and Ottomans met with great interest in Venice, since their significance went beyond the immediate meetings. The unfolding events did not simply reflect overall relations between the High Porte and the Venetian Signoria. The colonies may be considered arenas, where the abstract relative positions of the two powers were negotiated and manifested. The correspondent must have been aware not only that he was effectively reporting on the Republic's standing at the High Porte, but that the eyes of Venice were upon him, offering him an opportunity to distinguish himself.

Minio's descriptions seem unwieldy at first sight. At times, many days of disputes are condensed into a single sentence without noting the issue in question, while at other times he recreates statements in direct speech or even outlines entire exchanges. Whereas he reports some individual incidents

12 Lane F., *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, MD: 1973) 99; for the system of awarding offices in Venice, see Queller D., *The Venetian Patriciate: Reality versus Myth* (Chicago, IL: 1986). The Venetians' attitude towards the various offices of the Republic differed as greatly as the character of these offices. While some highly sought after ones were meant to provide for the impoverished patriciate, among them even sinecures that hardly required any work, others were less desirable or profitable and patricians fearing to be elected went to great lengths to avoid them.

13 Pratt M.L., *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: 1992) 6–7.

in exhausting detail, for example extensively specifying the location and circumstances of the meeting, he leaves out certain elements, such as the necessary process of translation, which he generally disregards. It is evident, however, that Venetians were interested not only in the results of the negotiations, but also the processes themselves. Thus the inclusion and omission of events and details were not coincidental, but served to inform and also influence an absent audience. The individual *dispacci* follow a narrative logic that builds up considerable suspense at times: The reporting governor actively tried to recreate—or create—an order of events, allowing the reader to retrace his experiences and arrive at the same conclusion. He virtually stages a play with himself as its protagonist. It is striking that he refrains from overtly judging events, while clearly implying his opinions and convictions to Venice through the described actions. Dependent as he was on the approval of the Signoria, he assured his audience that he was adequately representing their interests, while at the same time depicting himself and his decisions favourably.

If we look upon these reported events as theatrical plays, the colony itself becomes the stage, a metaphor that may prove helpful for analyzing the letters. On the one hand, a stage is a space on which actors perform, spatially separated from the audience. This audience, while not directly taking part in the events, is nevertheless the addressee of the performance. The actions presented on stage are selected for the spectators in order to impress and affect them. Similarly, persons acting in the colonies were, although closely observed, unreachable for Venice while the events were going on. The reporter plays to the expectations of his readers in Venice, and it is left up to the recipient to interpret, draw conclusions and imbue the presented actions and events with meaning. On the other hand, as a specific location, the stage can be seen as a space furnished with equipment and props. Nauplion and the Levant was not a blank slate for the Venetian mind. Venetians had their own ideas about the place and its inhabitants as well as about how the governor should behave. Without taking the metaphor too far, this understanding can help us to avoid seeing the descriptions as mere self-fashioning on the part of the reporter.¹⁴ It is more fitting instead to think of him donning the expected role of a minister to the Republic who was fulfilling his duty.¹⁵ Thus analyzing

14 See Greenblatt S.J., *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, IL: 1980).

15 The idea that the governors were representatives of the Republic of Venice in the colonies was very strong. Ideally, the office was conducted as impersonally as possible, see O'Connell, *Men of Empire* 57.

the *dispacci* in their discursive context and as expressions of the governor's subjective reporting helps shed light on the relationship between the accounts and existing ideas.

Introducing the Cast, Setting the Stage

To put these considerations into practise, a set of 90 *dispacci* from the Venetian colony of Nauplion will be analyzed. They are preserved in the Biblioteca Correr in Venice and were written by the aforementioned Bartolomeo Minio, who served there as *provveditore* from November 1479 until at least 25 March 1483, the date of the last letter.¹⁶ To remain within the metaphor, it now falls to the author of this chapter to set the stage and introduce the *dramatis personae*. Nauplion, like other smaller Venetian possessions of the *stato da mar*, was situated on the fringes of the Peloponnese, which the Venetians called Morea.¹⁷ An impression of the Venetian territories on the Peninsula around 1480 can be gained from the map [Fig. 3.1]. Since Mehmed II (1432–1481) had subdued the Greek Despotate of the Morea in 1460, the greater part of it now belonged to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸

In 1479, the year of Minio's arrival, Nauplion and its countryside had been in the possession of the Republic for about 100 years. It had suffered considerably during the prolonged war between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, which broke out in 1463 and finally ended with a peace treaty in January 1479.¹⁹

16 Biblioteca del Museo Correr di Venezia, Codici Cicogna Ms 2653: "Dispacci a senato e ad altri di Sier Bortolomeo Minio", published as Minio, *The Greek Correspondence of Bartolomeo Minio*, vol. 1, *Dispacci from Nauplion: 1479–1483* (2008).

17 For an overview of the Venetian *stato da mar*, see Arbel B., "Venice's Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period", in Dursteler E.R. (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History: 1400–1797* (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2013) 125–253; Lane, *Venice* 234–235.

18 Inalcik H., *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (New Rochelle, NY: 1973) 27–28.

19 The terms of the peace take the form of an *‘ahd-name*. This type of document stems from Islamic tradition and was issued unilaterally by the Sultan. It is therefore not a treaty in the strict sense of the word, but nonetheless includes reciprocity in the negotiated arrangement such as security for ships, merchants, and merchandise. Wright D.G., "When the Serenissima and the Gran Turco made Love: The Treaty of 1478", in *Studi Veneziani* 80 (2007) 261–277, at 263. The date in the title is given according to the *more veneto*. The Venetians regarded 1 March as the first day of the new year. The peace treaty was indeed issued on 25 January 1479.



FIGURE 3.1 *Map of the Peloponnese approximately depicting Venice's possessions around 1480, after Pitcher D.E., An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire from Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century (Leiden: 1972), map XIV and Wright D.G., "Bartolomeo Minio: Venetian Administration in 15th-Century Nauplion", Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies 3 (2000) 1–235, map 2.*

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Economically, Nauplion served above all as a market where the products of the Morea were gathered for export. Salt was Nauplion's most notable product, making a major contribution to its coffers. Since Nauplion itself was not a direct port on the Venetian shipping lines, the goods were usually brought by boat to Modon, where ships and galleys picked them up for transport to Venice.²⁰

20 Jameson M.H. – Runnels C.N. – Andel T.H. van – Munn M.H., *A Greek Countryside: The Southern Argolid from Prehistory to the Present Day* (Stanford, CA: 1994) 123–124; Wright D.G., "Bartolomeo Minio: Venetian Administration in 15th-Century Nauplion", in *Electronic Journal for Oriental Studies* 3 (2000) 1–247, at 23–24.

Although the town was not prosperous, it was well populated. Minio reports that the entire colony had 20,000 inhabitants. This number is probably only slightly exaggerated, since many mercenaries who had served Venice during the war remained in the colony.²¹ Venetians accounted for only a small proportion of inhabitants, the majority being Greeks. There was also a considerable number of Albanians, who appear frequently in Minio's letters and are characterized as decisively different from the Greeks. They lived semi-nomadically in impermanent settlements on territory belonging to the colony. Venice had encouraged them to settle the land to counter the serious loss of manpower caused by Ottoman raids.²² Many of these Albanians served the Serenissima as soldiers known as *stradioti*. Their arrangement with the Venetians followed a Byzantine system: In exchange for land and wartime booty, the *stradioti* were available to the Signoria as mercenaries. Venice employed them to fight in all of its major conflicts in the Mediterranean theatre of war as well as on the mainland.²³

Minio himself spent a large part of his life serving the Republic. Coming from an old and much-ramified patrician family, he was eligible for a variety of assignments. His first known post in the *stato da mar* was as *consiliere* to the *rettor* of Corfu. When he took office in Nauplion, he was in his early fifties, the usual age for a *provveditore*. His stay was unusually long since his original assignment was for two years only. Why his sojourn lasted three and a half years instead is unknown, but he could not leave until the Senate had elected a replacement and his relief had arrived in Nauplion.²⁴

Along with general news of the region, his reports contain several topics that run continuously throughout the letters, providing insights into the usual tasks of a governor that were certainly specified in his *commissione*. The main subjects are the administration and maintenance of the troops stationed in the colony, as well as improvements to the fortifications of the town of Nauplion by order of the Signoria. These efforts occurred throughout Venice's Greek mainland territories at the end of the fifteenth century. Regardless of its instructions, the government of the Republic was reluctant or at least slow in sending the

21 Wright, "Bartolomeo Minio" 27–28.

22 Ducellier A., "Les albanais dans les colonies vénétiennes au XV^e siècle", in *Studi Veneziani* 10 (1968) 47–64; Ducellier A., "Albanais dans les Balkans et en Italie à la fin du Moyen Age: Courants migratoires et connivences socio-culturelles", in Cavaciocchi S. (ed.), *Le migrazioni in Europa: Secc. XIII–XVII* (Prato: 1994) 233–279, at 244–245.

23 Wright, "Bartolomeo Minio" 64–65; Arbel, "Venice's Maritime Empire" 204; For a contemporary Venetian description of the *stradioti*, see Sanudo Il Giovane Marino, *Le vite dei dogi 1474–1494*, ed. A.C. Aricò, 2 vols. (Padua: 1989–2001) vol. 1, 420.

24 Wright, "Bartolomeo Minio" 14–15.

necessary materials, manpower, and ships needed for construction.²⁵ The letters are thus prone to repetition, especially regarding Minio's pleas for money, resources, and further instructions.

Claiming Victories, Passing on Defeats

During Minio's stay, the most urgent matter concerning the Ottomans was the question of the extent of the territory of Nauplion itself. During the peace talks, all questions of contested borders between Venetian and Ottoman possessions had been suspended for later decision on-site.²⁶ For Minio, this meant settling the issue with the governor of the adjacent Ottoman district or *sanjak*, which consisted of the Morea. In his letters he usually refers to him as *paşa* or *flamburar*, but the Ottoman title was *sanjak-bey* (literally "lord of the *sanjak*").²⁷ The name of the officeholder at the time was Süleyman. Minio used his name just once, but regularly identified him as a eunuch instead. The border dispute necessitated several direct and indirect interactions between Minio and the *sanjak-bey*, with quite different outcomes. Since Minio dutifully reported on the proceedings and his actions, the letters offer insight into his conduct under various circumstances.

The first letter dates from 29 January 1480 and describes what must be regarded as a setback for Venetian interests under Minio's command. He reports that the *sanjak-bey* had sent several letters demanding the surrender of the contested territories of Thermissi and Kastri and threatening to attack them otherwise. Minio, taking the danger seriously, issued orders to prepare for a raid. He stresses that the Greek peasants, following his orders, took refuge with their families and livestock in forts and on islands off the coast. The Albanians, by contrast, whom Minio describes as 'disobedient Albanians and people without any prudence and discipline', ignored the decreed

25 Pepper S., "Fortress and Fleet: The Defence of Venice's Mainland Greek Colonies in the Later Fifteenth Century", in Hale J.R. – Chambers D. – Clough C.H. – Mallett M.E. (eds.), *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice: Essays in Honour of John Hale* (London – Rio Grande, OH: 1993) 29–56, at 44–45.

26 Wright D.G., "After the Serenissima and the Grand Turk Made Love: The Boundary Commissions of 1480 and 1482", in Atasoy S. (ed.), *550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium* (Istanbul: 2004) 197–211, at 198–199. It also contains a complete description of the boundary negotiations in Nauplion and their results, which had to be abridged for this paper.

27 For the administrative division of the Ottoman Empire, see Imber C., *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (Basingstoke – New York, NY: 2002) esp. 177–215.

precautions.²⁸ As another measure, he reports having sent Sier Francesco de Nassin, a citizen of Nauplion, as an emissary to the *sanjak-bey* to protest and avert the impending attack. His letter devotes ample space to his orders to the emissary, including invoking Venice's rightful possession of the contested places to the Ottomans, and seemingly reassuring the Signoria of the same. Minio concludes by saying that he had even 'urged and begged' the *sanjak-bey* to desist from attacks, otherwise the Signoria and the Sultan himself would be informed.²⁹ However, before Sier Francesco was able to reach the *sanjak-bey*, the latter carried out the raid and carried off more than 100 Albanian subjects of Venice and large amounts of their livestock. The compliant Greeks, on the other hand, suffered hardly any harm. When Sier Francesco and the *sanjak-bey* finally met, the Ottoman refused to discuss the matter, and claimed he was following the orders of his lord, the Sultan.

Minio assured the Signoria that the *sanjak-bey*, though hostile, would not be willing to risk war. Instead he saw the true reason for the raids in their benefit to the *sanjak-bey*, to whom the Morea had been granted for exploitation. Minio affirmed that they had tried appeasement, following the Signoria's orders, evident from many letters, not to provoke the Ottomans in any way. Nonetheless, he predicted an unfavourable outcome to the upcoming border negotiations, which would be held in presence of a special emissary from Sultan Mehmed II, stating that this hostile *sanjak-bey* would be the judge, and quoting him as saying: 'Although the *emin* (i.e. special emissary) is coming, nevertheless I have the liberty to give what seems right to me'.³⁰ Minio's narrative is highly personalized and the arrangement of the letter skilful, demonstrating the careful composition of the *dispacci* notwithstanding their proximity to the events. Positing the Albanians as disobedient from the start allowed him to pass the blame for their eventual losses onto the victims themselves. His protests and pleading, and the injustice of the claims embedded in the description of the commission to the emissary, preceded the raid. Although his emissary did not submit them to the *sanjak-bey* before the raid, he highlights the act as vile and characterizes the Ottoman as an uncompromising villain. By having him speak directly, Minio effectively allows the Ottoman to unmask himself as a despot. He points out that the *sanjak-bey* and others had given false information to the Sultan, so that 'all evils come from him, and the trouble and offence

28 Minio, letter III (29 January 1480). All citations from the *dispacci* refer to Minio, *Dispacci from Nauplion*.

29 Minio, letter III (29 January 1480).

30 Minio, letter III (29 January 1480).

which have happened at the present time'.³¹ Minio dissimulates the duress under which overall Venetian-Ottoman relations placed him and the colony, downplaying its significance for Venice's standing at the Porte. In this the letter follows a general pattern in which the distant Sultan is usually presented as a well-meaning friend of Venice, willing to rein in his malevolent underlings if properly informed of their misdeeds. In this instance, though, Minio concedes that the Sultan might back the governor because of misinformation.

Only two weeks later, the possession of the disputed territories was again the subject of a letter. Since the *emin* Halil Bey had arrived to determine the borders, the *sanjak-bey* came to negotiate with Minio. The latter began with a diplomatic faux pas by sending Sier Francesco to meet the Ottoman delegation in his stead. In justifying this decision, he conjures up images of imminent danger. 'Considering the unreliability of the *flamburar*, and being concerned that some difficulties and dangers might occur, not so much for me personally as for this district'.³² But since his attendance was demanded unequivocally, he decided to go in person. Nevertheless, he upheld his assessment of the immediate danger of the situation by mentioning that he had issued the orders necessary to protect the town upon leaving. Moreover, he noted that he had taken as many soldiers as he could muster with him. This, however, should not be seen as a sign of an impending battle. He regularly described in detail the numbers and condition of the troops in the entourage accompanying the two parties during their meetings, as well as the locations of the meetings. This indicates the ritualistic character of such encounters, and was understood by the Venetians as a sign of status, asserting an adequate representation of the Republic.³³ Similarly, the letters also mention in a generalized fashion the exchange of appropriate greetings, 'fatto le debite salutation', and assertions of good intentions.³⁴

For the negotiations, Minio referred to the recently concluded peace treaty, stipulating that the boundaries of 1460, when Mehmed II took the Morea, were to be reinstated, and emphasized his readiness to prove the boundary lines with documents and witnesses supporting Venetian claims.³⁵ The *sanjak-bey*, following his own—as Minio puts it—corrupt agenda, was however unwilling to negotiate on this basis. Denying any corresponding orders, he argued that

31 Minio, letter III (29 January 1480).

32 Minio, letter V (10 January 1480).

33 Althoff G., *Inszenierte Herrschaft: Geschichtsschreibung und politisches Handeln im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: 2003) 279.

34 Minio, letter V (10 January 1480).

35 Wright, "After the Serenissima" 198.

he had instructions to take all the territory for which the *decima*, the 10 percent tax to the Sultan, had been paid. This would put the border at a bridge close to the town, depriving the Venetian colony of nearly two-thirds of its territory and putting it in an economically impossible position.

Minio includes a lengthy description of his unsuccessful attempts to persuade the uncooperative *sanjak-bey* that he was in fact misinterpreting the orders given to him. He argues that the section cited referred only to the territory of Monemvasia in the south of the Morea, but the *sanjak-bey* was not swayed and without negotiations declared the bridge to be the new border. What is more, he prohibited subjects of the Signoria from crossing it to work the land. Minio accuses him of not seeking peace, and for his part claims to have taken the high road. Declaring ostentatiously that he was following orders from the Signoria, Minio asserts that he would continue to welcome the Ottoman subjects in Nauplion, in compliance with the treaty, and that the *sanjak-bey* should do the same.

The letter closely follows the pattern established by the previous one and confirms the roles assigned to Minio and the *sanjak-bey*. As the selfless minister of the Republic, Minio obeys the instructions set by his authorities and tries to defuse the situation only to be coerced by the despotic *sanjak-bey*, who is acting on his own account and for personal gain. He explains the disastrous outcome in terms not of his own weak position, but of the character of the Ottomans, 'arrogant people, faithless, without any rationality,' noting, 'I have not been able to reach a good settlement with them, and am concerned that worse things will happen to your other places'.³⁶ This statement corresponds to notions about Ottoman character and customs commonly found in humanist treatises and probably widely held among Venetians of the time.³⁷ It suggests that Minio could rely on widespread attitudes among his compatriots to underline his descriptions of the *sanjak-bey* as a malevolent Ottoman. Similarly, bold and simple—usually derogatory—statements can be found about the Albanians. They usually occur in conjunction with setbacks for Venice or failures on Minio's part. Instead of admitting his own shortcomings or weaknesses, he evaded responsibility and terminated the debate by attributing any difficulties to what he saw as the especially trying character of the ethnic groups he encountered, which made problems with them inevitable.

While the *sanjak-bey* fills the role of Minio's strong-minded adversary, the *emin* Halil Bey, whose arrival occasioned the encounter, hardly appears in the letter. At one point, however, Minio uses him to further illustrate Ottoman

36 Minio, letter v (10 January 1480).

37 See Bisaha, *Creating East and West* esp. 43–93; Meserve, *Empires of Islam* esp. 65–116.

misconduct. Minio describes offering gifts to the two Ottoman officials, apparently products from the colony itself, 'worth about 26 ducats, of barley bread, honey, confections of sugar, candles and other things'.³⁸ While the *sanjak-bey* accepted them, the *emin* did not, leading Minio to conclude 'he seems to me to be completely lacking in breeding'.³⁹ Despite the *sanjak-bey's* usual rigidity, Minio wrested a concession from him to take no further actions against Nauplion for two months, allowing him to confer with Venice. Minio urged the Signoria to take action in the matter and instruct him on how to handle the situation. Although it is uncertain to what extent this can be directly linked to Minio, the Serenissima and the High Porte agreed on renegotiations after diplomatic appeals by the Venetians. The Signoria and Sultan Mehmed respectively entrusted Giovanni Dario, a well-known Venetian secretary who served the Republic in several missions, and another *emin* called Sinan Bey to examine the conditions on the ground and reach conclusive border agreements for the various Venetian colonies. Their first stop was Nauplion, where they arrived in August 1480 and stayed for about ten days.⁴⁰ Minio reports on the proceedings in a letter dated 5 September.

In contrast to other letters, Minio comes straight to the point of the disputes here. The kind of dramatic prelude found in earlier letters featuring the danger of Ottoman attacks may have seemed unnecessary, since the outcome of this round of negotiations was largely positive for Venice. Poor results did not have to be measured against a potential total loss of the colony, as had been the case previously. The tone of the letter differs considerably, and the first issue it addresses is the possession of the nearby castles of Kiveri, Thermissi and Kastri, including their territories and salt-pans. The argument itself is comparatively comprehensible, and revolves around the status of the castles in 1460. While Minio asserted that they had been Venetian possessions 'from a time long past' and tried to substantiate the claim with documents and testimonies, the Ottoman delegation argued that the Sultan had seized them 'from the hand of the despots'.⁴¹ The Ottoman delegation refused to negotiate the matter, but offered to prove their claims through the Sultan's cadastre. Since their tax

38 Minio, letter v (10 January 1480).

39 Minio, letter v (10 January 1480).

40 Babinger F., *Johannes Darius (1414–1494): Sachwalter Venedigs im Morgenland, und sein griechischer Umkreis* (Munich: 1961) 86–87; Tiepolo M.F., "Greci nella Cancelleria Veneziana: Giovanni Dario", in Tiepolo M.F. – Tonetti E. (eds.), *I Greci a Venezia: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studio, Venezia, 5–7 novembre 1998* (Venice: 2002) 243–314, at 294–295.

41 Minio, letter xxii (5 September 1480).

revenues already had been estimated and the castles and their surroundings had been properly registered and granted as fiefs to *timaroti*, the Ottomans claimed to have no authority to negotiate them. Minio did not relent, noting that the Sultan himself had agreed to this new commission to give the Venetians an opportunity to prove their just claims and rectify the judgements made by the Halil Bey, who had taken what he pleased at random. After two days of discussion, the Ottomans agreed 'with the greatest fatigue and difficulty' to hear witnesses.⁴² The witnesses, whom Minio describes as wise old men led by the Greek bishop of Nauplion before whom they also swore on the gospels, affirmed the Venetian view. All testimony was thoroughly recorded by a scribe from each party and Sinan Bey and his delegation admitted the rightful possession of the sites and promised to initiate their cancellation from the registers. The oath taken by the Greeks seems at first glance to be a simple requirement before testifying, but the significance of the act reveals itself in connection with the next dispute.

The next issue raised in the letter is the territory of Nauplion itself. Minio mentions having offered the Ottomans two possibilities for assessing just borders, believing that both of them would lead to favourable results: Dividing the land between Nauplion and the much smaller neighbouring Ottoman town of Argos according to population and needs, or reconstructing the old borders based on documentary evidence and witnesses. While the parties failed to reach an agreement on the terms of the first proposal, the Ottoman envoys agreed to pace off the boundaries after long discussions and learning that the Greek and Ottoman elders' opinions on the course of the border coincided. While the Ottoman subjects took an oath, the Ottoman delegation refused to allow the Greek witnesses brought in by the Venetians to be sworn in, 'saying that according to their law it was not permitted that the witnesses of both sides should take an oath'.⁴³ The ensuing argument was, as Minio reported, settled by the agreement that the elders from both sides would go together and indicate the boundaries, which would be recorded by the Venetian clerk and the *sanjak-bey's* scribe.⁴⁴

42 Minio, letter XXII (5 September 1480).

43 Minio, letter XXII (5 September 1480).

44 The question of the validity of testimonies by non-Muslim witnesses to Ottoman or Muslim courts more generally is complicated, but not at the core of the argument. Suffice it to say that the Ottoman witnesses were probably also not Muslims, especially since they were elders from a region fairly recently conquered by the Sultan. Ottoman law did not only distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims. It paid equal attention to a person's status as subject or non-subject of the Sultan, as well as distinguishing between different sorts of

At this point Minio acknowledges that the process of determining the borders followed Ottoman rules of procedure; although he objected to certain provisions, he had to yield and the elders did not take an oath. The precise argument invoked by the Ottoman delegation is impossible to reconstruct and the exact form the process took remains unknown. Ottoman law was mainly based on the Hanafi school of Islamic law. It indeed contains stipulations that witnesses are not necessarily required to take an oath.⁴⁵ The difference to the previous case is striking, but may be rooted in Ottoman rules of procedure. The lack of understanding on Minio's part nonetheless reveals the impromptu arrangement of the negotiations, the procedure of which had to be mediated between the Ottomans and Venetians. Although Minio presents himself in the whole letter as the active party, setting the agenda and driving the issues along, it becomes apparent that it was mainly the Ottomans who set the rules and the Venetians who followed, even if Minio did not understand them entirely, or was at least unable to explain the argument precisely. Even though the outcome of the deliberations was favourable overall for the Venetians, they were mere supplicants to the Ottomans. While high-ranking officials from both sides were present, and are for the most part presented as equals, designating the affair as a boundary commission may in fact be misleading.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the boundaries were paced off to Minio's complete satisfaction, and there were only two minor discordances in the general agreement, which were resolved through compromise or postponed. In a manner typical of the *dispacci* as well as the *relazioni*, Minio concludes his presentation by recapitulating his bodily and intellectual efforts and diligence in the negotiations, all to the honour of the Serene Republic and the satisfaction of the inhabitants of the place. Giovanni Dario, however, who had conducted several important negotiations for the Serenissima and whose diplomatic skills were

evidence and whether they were brought forward by the plaintiff or the respondent. Thus the possible reasons for objections were abundant. Cf. Parolin G.P., "Equality Before the Law", in Peters R. – Bearman P. (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Islamic Law* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2014) 123–135, at 127–128; Brunschvig R., "Bayyina", in Gibb H.A.R. – Kramers J.H. – Lévi-Provençal E. – Bearman P.J. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 12 vols. (2nd ed. Leiden: 1960–2004) vol. 1, 1150–1151. Dario's report on the negotiations is considerably shorter and does not clarify the matter. According to Dario the issue revolved around the refusal of the Ottomans, based on 'their laws and customs', to provide the Venetians with a written copy of the testimonies. A.S. Venezia, Sen. Del. Sec. Reg. 29, fols. 151r–152v (11 January 1481).

45 Schacht J., *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: 1982) 188–191; Messick B., "The Judge and the Mufti", in Peters – Bearman, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Islamic Law* 73–91, at 84–85.

46 See Wright, "After the Serenissima".

held in great esteem by the Venetians, is demoted by Minio in his descriptions of the negotiations to a mere supporting role.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, recapitulating, he emphasizes Dario's usefulness, but the highest praise Minio has to offer remains that Dario consistently shared his own opinions and intentions.

Finally, he mentions Sinan Bey, who, as Minio put it, had proven himself a friend of the Republic. He had treated him as well as possible given the restricted possibilities of the place, but after conferring with Dario had refrained from giving him any gifts, 'considering that the *paşa* and the *cadis* have put him under observation, and thinking that he might be discovered and ruined'.⁴⁸ Minio hoped nonetheless that the Signoria would find a way to show its appreciation to him, to ensure his continuing good will. If one compares this situation to the encounter with the *emin* Halil Bey, the different reactions to their shared aversion to accepting gifts is striking. What Minio presents as ultimate proof of the depravity of the one he accepts in the case of the other, implicitly offering it as evidence of the unstable administration of the Ottoman Empire. Although, according to Minio, Nauplion only received what was its due, the acceptance of this ruling on the part of the Ottomans remained questionable, and good relations with the Venetians were enough to tarnish the reputation of an Ottoman official. He did not consider that there might have been a general ban on accepting gifts or some other underlying cause, even after a consultation with Dario, who was presumably acquainted with the diplomatic customs. Rather than seeking some underlying rationale for this conduct, he ascribed it to the personal motivations of the emissaries, thus reinforcing preconceptions about the Ottomans.

The overall goal seems simple: Minio claimed the victories and passed on the defeats. He employed the description of his encounters with his Ottoman counterparts to present himself as mediator and a worthy representative of Venice. That Minio indeed went beyond this is made clear by his penultimate letter from Nauplion.

Nudging Venice from Afar

This letter, written on 1 February 1483, not only differs greatly from the previous ones, but also reveals how tenuous the attitude of friendship and appeasement

47 The admiration continues to this day and is certainly perceptible in the studies devoted to him, see Tiepolo, "Greci". Babinger even went so far to call him the 'saviour' of Venice, Babinger, *Johannes Darius* 71.

48 Minio, letter XXII (5 September 1480).

towards the Sultan was.⁴⁹ It is dedicated almost completely to the opportunity to foster an insurrection in the Ottoman Empire and replace the Sultan, proposals that did not originate with Minio, but which he presents in such a way as to suggest his support for a change of Venetian policy in that direction. The overall situation had changed considerably since the time of border disputes. Not only did power now lie in the hands of Bayezid II (1448–1512), following the death of his father Mehmed II in May 1481, but on the Morea the malevolent *sanjak-bey* Süleyman had been replaced by Ahmed Bey in February of that same year. In February 1483 Minio had already corresponded with and met him several times. A central issue had been an uprising by a group of Albanian insurgents, who had ravaged and pillaged the Morea. Since the responsibility for these offences was disputed between the Ottomans and Venetians, their relations in the Morea were strained.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Minio depicts the new *sanjak-bey* in his letters as fairly affable, demonstrating that he himself was well able to detach himself from the known stereotypes and did not resort to them unless necessary.

The interaction described in the penultimate letter would be their last and was initiated by Minio. Since the *sanjak-bey* was in the area to raze an Ottoman castle close to Argos, Minio took the initiative and sent an envoy called Kakoyanni, captain of a contingent of *stradioti*, to ask him if Venice could take over the castle instead. He argued that without fortified places the area would become a hotbed for outlaws, and if the Venetians secured the place it would benefit the Sultan as well. In the very first sentence of the letter Minio already points out the close relationship he had built with the *sanjak-bey*, underlining the feasibility of the request and its prospects of success. Kakoyanni met Ahmed Bey and submitted Minio's proposal, which was, nonetheless, immediately rebuffed. The *sanjak-bey* alluded to longstanding instructions from the Sultan, whose fulfilment several low-ranking officials now demanded. With the initial request denied, the subject of the letter changes entirely. Kakoyanni, already on his way out of Ahmed Bey's tent, was held back by the latter. In the presence of only a young relative called Omar Celebi, the Bey was willing to tell him a 'gran secreto' if the captain vowed to disclose it to nobody but Minio himself.⁵¹

49 Minio, letter XXXIX (1 February 1483).

50 The Albanians were led by Krokodeilos Kladas and had formerly served the Republic of Venice. They were joined by a group of disgruntled *stratioti* from Nauplion, therefore Minio was directly involved. Wright D.G., "The Kladas Affair and Diplomatic Relations (1480–1485)", in *Studi Veneziani* 67 (2013) 157–182; Setton K., *The Papacy and the Levant 1204–1571*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: 1978–2004) vol. 2, *The Fifteenth Century* 328–329.

51 Minio, letter XXXIX (1 February 1483).

After agreeing to this condition, Kakoyanni was asked about the whereabouts of Cem, the brother of the ruling Sultan, but denied all knowledge. Nonetheless the *sanjak-bey* requested that he inform 'Misier the Provveditor, my brother' that the Signoria had the best opportunity in 200 years to enlarge its territory.⁵² He said the 'rapacious' and 'volatile' Sultan had recently killed the honourable Ahmed Paşa and summoned him and other leading *sanjak-beys* to the court.⁵³ Fearing the same fate, Ahmed Bey and the others had vowed to do whatever they had to. Thus he presented the prospect of surrendering large parts of the Morea, Albania or other places to the Serenissima in return for procuring Cem and bringing him to Lepanto or another safe place. He emphasized the urgency of the matter and demanded absolute secrecy for Minio's correspondence with the Signoria. On his way back to Nauplion, Kakoyanni was accompanied by Omar Celebi, who repeated the offer in private to Minio himself, after having him swear an oath of secrecy. Minio reported to the Signoria that he had hosted the young Ottoman honourably and then sent him away with sweet but non-committal words and the promise to inform Ahmed Bey—who, as Minio stressed, had always shown himself to be a good friend of the Republic—as soon as he had an answer from Venice.

Two days later, Minio learned that the *sanjak-bey* was about to leave for the Porte whilst his replacement was about to arrive. Immediately he sent Kakoyanni, who caught up with him on the open road. In public they exchanged some friendly words and in private the *sanjak-bey* proved that he stood by his word and affirmed his offer. Lamenting his departure, he released Kakoyanni with tears in his eyes. In a direct appeal at the end of the letter Minio asks the Signoria to consider the proposition and above all to keep it secret in order not to endanger the lives of the *sanjak-bey* and the others.

In order to understand the *sanjak-bey's* proposal, one should know that like his half-brother Bayezid, Cem (1459–1495) had made a bid for the Ottoman throne after the death of their father Mehmed II. Despite being able to rally some support he was defeated by Bayezid, who reached the capital first and

52 Minio, letter XXXIX (1 February 1483).

53 Minio refers here to Gedik Ahmed Paşa (d. 1482), an accomplished military commander who served Mehmed II as Grand Vizier from 1474 until 1477. Later he became *Kapudan* of the fleet and most notably led the attack on Otranto in 1480. Although he was decisive in securing the succession against Cem, Sultan Bayezid distrusted him since he had failed to capture his defeated and fleeing brother. In November 1482 he had him executed with others suspected of being partisans of Cem, see Reindl H., *Männer um Bayezid: Eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bayezids II. (1481–1512)* (Berlin: 1983) 100–128; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* vol. 2, 284.

enjoyed the support of the Janissaries. After a short sojourn in Egypt, Cem launched another failed attempt to overthrow his brother, whereupon he fled to the Knights Hospitaller on Rhodes in July 1482. The knights effectively leveraged him against Sultan Bayezid and achieved political and economic concessions. In exchange for neutralizing his brother, Sultan Bayezid granted them various benefits and a yearly payment for the honourable maintenance and custody of Cem. The failed pretender himself was soon transferred to France where the Hospitallers held him as a de facto prisoner at various locations. That is where he would have been at the time of Ahmed Bey's proposal. The Hospitallers surrendered him to the Holy See in 1489, and during the later years of the reign of Pope Innocent VIII (1484–1492) deliberations were made to lead a crusade against Bayezid and use Cem to dismantle the Empire. It was even suggested that the Mamluks should participate in the enterprise, but all plans were abandoned after the unexpected death of the powerful Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus (1432–1490).⁵⁴

It was not uncommon during the Middle Ages for foreign powers to host Ottoman princes or take them hostage. It was a way to take advantage of the uncertainty of the Ottoman rules of succession, which granted every male descendant the legitimate right to compete for the throne. Byzantine or Venetian threats to release or support a pretender could lead to serious unrest in the Ottoman Empire, and even the intimation that one might do so was an effective bargaining chip. Thus the danger posed by Cem was known and feared by Bayezid, as proven by the purge of the imperial administration to which Gedik Ahmed Paşa fell victim, and the diplomatic efforts he undertook to keep his brother neutralized. Ahmed Bey's proposal is therefore to be taken seriously, but the Serene Republic never showed any interest in such plans.⁵⁵

The scenes of conversations are indicated particularly clearly in this letter. Apart from his pleas for secrecy, Minio demonstrates his own handling of the situation and the trustworthiness of the envoys involved. He emphasizes his familiarity with Ahmed Bey, not simply through his own open assurance of faith in him; he also gives the implicit impression that the feeling is mutual,

54 Cf. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* vol. 2, 381–416; Inalcik H., "A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II Regarding Djem Sultan", in Inalcik H. (ed.), *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington, IN: 1993) 342–368, esp. 346–348.

55 Inalcik, "A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy" 351–356; Kafadar C., "The Ottoman Empire and Europe", in Brady T.A. Jr. – Oberman H.A. – Tracy J.D. (eds.), *Handbook of European History 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, 2 vols. (Leiden – Boston, MA: 1994) vol. 1, *Structures and Assertions* 589–636, at 592.

demonstrating in the process the necessary foundation of trust for an undertaking on this scale. This is most noticeable when he has the *sanjak-bey* address him as 'brother'. While this affective designation is conspicuously used twice in this dispatch, it appears in no other. Minio highlights the possible gains and, stressing the *sanjak-bey*'s credibility, depicts the proposal in a wholly positive light, omitting any doubts or drawbacks. He nonetheless maintains outward neutrality and is careful to affirm that he had made no definite commitment on his own part or the Republic's, which would far exceed his authority, and yet he is far from impartial.⁵⁶ It seems he tried to nudge the Republic towards a less conciliatory policy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. It is conceivable that the good of the Republic was not foremost in his mind, and that he was hoping to benefit from his role as mediator in a coup d'état, or from his possession, in Ahmed Bey, of an undoubtedly more powerful Ottoman friend at the Porte after a possible rebellion.

Conclusion

The intercultural encounters Bartolomeo Minio describes in his *disparci* cannot be viewed separately from the person of the *provveditore*, who was determined to set up the Levant as a stage for himself and the Republic of Venice he represented. Although he does not openly accentuate his personal merits, he consciously fashions the narrative to cast himself in the role of faithful servant and representative of Venice. He rarely represents actions as deliberate decisions, but rather as consistent reactions to given situations that were hard to criticize, even if they proved questionable or led to diplomatic indignation. The detailed description of the course of events, extending beyond the mere results of negotiations, allowed him to subtly influence his audience. Justifying his actions and decisions, he not only shaped and simplified the course of events, but moulded the descriptions of actors to conform to common perceptions of the Levant. In this way he contributed to and reinforced the inner-Venetian discourse and notions about the Ottomans in particular. Confronted with the difficult situation of the first boundary negotiations, he shows himself in a favourable light in contrast to the Ottoman governor, whom he not only sets up as an antagonist, but also as a reverse image of his own role. He forestalls eventual accusations of mismanagement while at the same time

56 After Cem's flight to Rhodes the Senate secretly issued an explicit order to the governors of the colonies, not to get involved in the struggle or offer aid in any way to the pretender. A.S. Venezia, Sen. Del. Sec. Reg. 30, fols. 118v–119r (13 September 1482).

recommending himself for other posts as a successful mediator. Moreover, his letters seize the opportunity and subtly attempt to influence Venetian politics, albeit perhaps with his own advantage in mind. Nevertheless, he demonstrably remains within the limits of his authority and maintains an outwardly neutral position.

On another level, Minio's presentation highlights the quality of the *dispacci* as a site where Venetian notions of the Ottomans and of Venice itself had to be mediated and reconciled with Levantine realities. This is especially true given the extent to which Minio obscures Venice's weak position vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. Although it is said that Venice took a pragmatic approach to its powerful Muslim neighbour to the East, there certainly is an ideological component to Minio's description of the encounters. Thus it was apparently impossible to admit to being in an inferior position. In this regard Minio played to the expectations of his Venetian audience, manifested partially in the humanist discourse about the Ottomans. Minio is eager to attribute all adversity to the tyrannical despotism of individual Ottoman officials who went rogue and acted against orders. While being temporarily and unjustly coerced by a corrupt local governor appeared tenable, the Serene Republic itself had to be kept on a par with the Sultan himself. Minio is playing to Venetian assumptions of superiority, even while strong-armed by Ottomans, and stresses his possession of the moral high ground. In the end, he describes his actions in the specific setting of the Levant, and while he himself moved on to other places, he solidified certain stereotypical notions of the Levant and its inhabitants by invoking them, leaving them and the stage to other players.

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The Queen in the Pawnshop: Shaping Civic Virtues in a Painting for the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi in Venice

Nicolai Kölmel

This chapter is about Venetian society. It deals with Venetian public self-understanding in the sixteenth century and its reflections in the visual culture of the time. It investigates Venetians' perceptions of their polity, their conceptions of justice, of giving and receiving, and of pious duties. This chapter is also concerned with biblical exegesis, public loans and marriage festivities, with dowries, pictorial dress codes, Christian virtues and a pagan queen. But most of all, it is dedicated to an individual painting: *A Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* by the workshop of Bonifacio de' Pitati (ca. 1486–1553) [Fig. 4.1]. This painting was made in 1556 for the Monte di Sussidio, an office in the Venetian financial administration located in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi. It can be understood as the product of various interlocking notions and conceptions within Venetian society. But the painting does not simply reflect these ideas. As part of the pictorial decoration in a government office, it also shaped ideas and transformed the financial transactions carried out in its field



FIGURE 4.1 *Workshop of Bonifacio de' Pitati, The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1556). Oil on canvas, 182 × 444 cm. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia.*

IMAGE © GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA, VENICE.

of view. Analysed as a focal point for all these discourses, the canvas quite literally functioned as a site of mediation. Because the painting has not been on display for many years, it has received hardly any scholarly attention thus far—undeservedly, as the following analysis will show.¹

Introduction: In Solomon's Palace

The meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is one of the best-known legends in the Old Testament. Since the fifth or sixth century BCE, the encounter between the wise king and the fabulously rich queen from afar has inspired numerous authors. The story is found in Jewish, Muslim, and several Christian traditions and has left its traces not only in religious texts but also, to this day, in folk tales, the pictorial arts, opera, theatre, and cinema.² Given this

- 1 Today the painting is stored in the depots of the Galleria dell'Accademia. The large-scale canvas (444 × 182 cm) is not in the best condition, with serious abrasion and fading colours. Since the painting is dated 'MDLVI' and Bonifacio already died in 1553, the work was necessarily made by disciples or workshop members such as Antonio Palma (Antonio Negretti) or Battista Brunello (Battista di Bonifacio). For the sake of simplicity I will in the following refer to the painting nevertheless as Bonifacio's. I think this is acceptable, since even during Bonifacio's lifetime the artist's name should be better understood as an umbrella term for his very productive workshop. Since the *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* broadly follows the same compositional principles established in the Palazzo di Camerlenghi by Bonifacio, his name here solely functions as a label. For the question of attribution, see, most recently, Cottrell P. – Humfrey P., *Bonifacio de' Pitati* (Treviso: forthcoming), attributing the painting tentatively to Antonio Palma. I am most grateful to Philip Cottrell for permission to use his manuscript concerning the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi and for his most helpful comments. The painting is further discussed in Cottrell P., *Bonifacio's Enterprise: Bonifacio de' Pitati and Venetian Painting*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of St. Andrews: 2001) at 163–165; Ludwig G., "Bonifazio di Pitati da Verona: Eine archivalische Untersuchung II", *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 23 (1902) 36–66, at 58–59; Moschini Marconi S., *Gallerie dell' Accademia di Venezia: Opere d'Arte del Secolo XVI* (Rome: 1962) 64–65; Westphal D., *Bonifazio Veronese* (Munich: 1931) 124; Ivanoff N., "Antonio Negretti detto Antonio Palma", in Zampetti P. (ed.), *I Pittori Bergamaschi dal XIII al XIX secolo: Il Cinquecento*, 4 vols. (Bergamo: 1979) vol. 3, 379–399; and Cottrell P., "Corporate Colors: Bonifacio and Tintoretto at the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi in Venice", *The Art Bulletin* 82 (2000) 658–678, at 668. On Bonifacio de' Pitati see also: Todd H.D., *Out of the Shadow of Titian: Bonifacio de' Pitati and 16th Century Venetian Painting* (Ann Arbor, MI: 2003).
- 2 For the Christian tradition of this story from an art historical point of view, see Watson P.F., "The Queen of Sheba in Christian Tradition", in Pritchard J.B. (ed.), *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* (London: 1974) 115–145; for a general overview, see Toy C.H., "The Queen of Sheba", *The Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907) 207–212; further the contributions in Pritchard, *Solomon*

enormous resonance, the oldest sources (1 *Kings* 10:1–13; 2 *Chronicles* 9:1–12) provide very little information. Having heard of Solomon's famous wisdom, the queen comes to Jerusalem to meet the legendary King of Israel. She is impressed by his wealth and his noble entourage. Overwhelmed by the beauty of the newly built temple and Solomon's palace, she presents him with great amounts of gold, spices and precious stones. After answering all her questions to prove his wisdom, Solomon rewards the queen for her generous gifts by giving her 'all she desired'.³ Honoured by these return gifts, she journeys home, never again to be mentioned in the Old Testament.⁴

Bonifacio de' Pitati's painting refers to this story, depicting the moment when the queen presents Solomon with her gifts. On the left, we see the king among his royal retinue. Remarkably, the most prominent members of his entourage are clothed in a rather Ottoman manner, wearing kaftans, turbans or even Janissary hats. Solomon himself, though, is dressed in a pseudo-antique blue robe, and a golden toga. His garments, crown, and sceptre as well as his throne with its sphinx-shaped armrests emphasize his royal status. From his elevated position, he is looking down on the treasures brought before him, addressing the queen with what seems to be an adlocutio gesture, implying both command and appeasement.

The queen and her followers, all luxuriously dressed, enter the scene from the opposite side. In fact, it is she and her retinue who actually dominate the composition. To fit into its original architectural surroundings, the upper edge of the large-scale canvas has been shaped into three arches and the queen is placed right in the centre of the middle arch. Stepping forward, she seems just about to kneel down in front of the king. It is this act of submission that Solomon interrupts and rejects with his gesture, which not merely refuses the queen's subordination but syncopates the story and postpones the narrative flow. Together with the posture of other figures among his entourage, the king's outstretched arm marks a moment of hesitation. It suspends the movement within the queen's retinue and (temporarily) stops the flow of golden vessels,

and the Queen of Sheba; Deubner-Ziegler E., "La Reine de Saba: L'origine du mythe et son succès au Moyen-Âge", in El-Wakil L. – Guerretta P. – Marquis J.-M. – Natale M. – Schwok C.-L. – Vaisse P. (eds.), *Liber Veritatis: Mélanges en l'honneur du professeur Marcel G. Roethlisberger* (Milan: 2007) 81–99; and Kleinert U., *Das Rätsel der Königin von Saba: Geschichte und Mythos* (Darmstadt: 2015).

3 English Standard Version, 2 *Chronicles* 9:12.

4 There are some passages of the New Testament that mention a 'queen of the south' who was usually associated with the Queen of Sheba, see Watson, "The Queen of Sheba" 115–117 and Kleinert, *Das Rätsel* 44–46.

decorated jugs and silver plates brought before his throne. By this deictic interruption, the king generates an open interval in the pictorial narrative that is further emphasized by the incomplete movements of various protagonists.⁵ The snapshot-like frozen movements avoid spelling out the story until the very end. In depicting the performed acts in a moment of 'not yet', the narrative is suspended and kept in abeyance. This deliberate incompleteness of the pictorial narrative is visible, for example, in the figure of the kneeling servant situated at the lower edge of the painting. The golden vessel he is about to lay down has not touched the ground, and thus has not yet been handed over. Similarly, the queen's symbolically significant laying down of her crown is depicted as an unfinished movement. Still in her hands, the crown has not even touched the plate held by the bowing servant beside her. Thus, the narrative in progress could still go either way. Her body posture underlines this narrative indeterminacy. Her right leg stepping forward and the slight bending of both her knees insinuates her intention to kneel down, but it is left to the beholder to envision the further proceedings. Likewise, the unoccupied space between the two royals becomes significant. The openness in the pictorial narrative finds a compositional equivalent here. It provides the contemporary beholder with the freedom to continue the story in his or her own imagination. Will Solomon stand up, step forward, and reach for the queen's hand? Will he accept the offered gifts, or will he interrupt her subordination and reject her donation? What will the queen do? Will she kneel down, prostrate herself before the throne and insist on her offering, or will she straighten up and withdraw her submission? The indeterminacies in the pictorial narration provoked by incomplete movements and the open interval animate the beholder to continue the story. Because of the need for narrative completion, the indeterminacies function as joints in the communication between the painting and its beholder.⁶

The communicative range offered by these narrative indeterminacies is, however, far from arbitrary. Since the painting was made for a particular

5 This undefined moment in the pictorial narration is what Wolfgang Kemp has called an 'Unbestimmtheitsstelle' (in English versions mostly translated as 'blank'). For Kemp's approach in general, see Kemp W., *Der Anteil des Betrachters: Rezeptionsästhetische Studien zur Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: 1983); for an English translation of his major ideas, see Kemp W., "The Work of Art and its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception", in Cheetham M.A. (ed.), *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 1998) 180–196, for the 'Unbestimmtheitsstelle'; see esp. 188. For a similar methodological approach, see also Michel Baxandall's concept of the 'period eye', Baxandall M., *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT: 1985).

6 Kemp, "The Work of Art and its Beholder" 188.

audience and social environment, its understanding relies fundamentally on a shared *cultural imaginary background*. This background framed the imagination of the beholder and can be considered the environment that shaped the pictorial meaning. The term *cultural imaginary background* builds on Cornelius Castoriadis's concept of a 'social imaginary'.⁷ As Castoriadis has argued, the social imaginary is not limited to the conceptions, notions, ideas, and mental images shared by a society, but also includes their manifestations in material culture, art, and architecture, as well as their institutional, economic, and social practises.⁸ Following Castoriadis, the *cultural imaginary background* will be understood here as an underlying matrix of a society, which generates a coherence that allows a number of individuals to perceive themselves as a community.⁹ It is against this shared *cultural imaginary background* that a community produces its own cultural forms, and it is these forms that in turn shape the society's social imaginary. Because of their indeterminacy, community and the cultural imaginary are always interdependent; they come into existence as a never-ending mutual process of reflection and constant negotiation that defines a society's self-understanding—and as a continuous flux of change.

The analysis of the *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* will therefore help us to understand not only the painting, but also the notions connected with the financial transactions carried out in its vicinity. In order to understand the painting and its *cultural imaginary background*, I will first discuss the picture within its institutional surroundings. I will then point out how the depicted act of gift-giving suits a purpose within the artistic decoration in the Monte di Sussidio—a Venetian financial department that could be best described as an amalgam between a public pawnbroker, a bank for government bonds and part of the Venetian war chest. This wider framework requires an understanding of the interaction between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba against the background of the self-understanding of the Venetian state. As I will argue, this self-understanding takes on even sharper contours within two additional contexts. One of them is the incorporation of Levantine

7 Castoriadis C., *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. K. Blamey (Cambridge, MA: 1987). Although Castoriadis mostly neglects paintings or other material objects in his concept, his ideas concerning the 'social imaginary' can be adopted fruitfully for the historical understanding of Venetian visual culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. I will discuss the concept of a *cultural imaginative background* in my forthcoming dissertation in the context of 'geteilte Vorstellungen'.

8 Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution* 587–595.

9 Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution* 78–84.

worlds into the Venetian self-understanding and the allusion to similar representations, and the other the *cultural imaginary background* of marriage and dowries. In conclusion, I will summarize how these various social and pictorial discourses that resonate in the pictorial indeterminacies all contribute to the social imaginary of a just and wise Venetian community.

The Queen in the Pawnshop: The Painting in the Context of the Monte di Sussidio

Looking at the painting, we notice that the meeting between the two royals takes place in a Renaissance loggia. The coats of arms of Venetian families above the queen and on the bottom step of Solomon's throne strengthen the particular Venetian atmosphere.¹⁰ The local setting is rendered more explicit by the integration into the painting of the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi—the place where it was intended to hang.¹¹ The building in the background, below the right arch, can be clearly identified by its specific roof structure, its façade, and in particular the tondo held by a carved lion's head on the front wall [Fig. 4.2]. Although the tondo is empty today, Bonifacio's painting reveals that it once contained a frescoed Lion of St. Mark, as was typical of all Venetian government buildings.¹² Located at the Rialto—the Venetian centre of trade and finance—the so-called Palazzo functioned as an administrative building that might be better, but anachronistically, described as an office block.¹³ The storeys above the Venetian debtors' prison on the ground floor accommodated the offices of various Venetian financial administrative bodies such as the Camerlenghi di Commun, the Magistrato di Sale, the Camera degli Imprestiti or the Monte di Sussidio [Fig. 4.3].

The canvas depicting the queen's presentation of her gifts to Solomon was part of the decoration of the last-mentioned office. In the Venetian financial system, the Monte di Sussidio functioned as an institution to administer public

10 On the coats of arms and their identification, see Ludwig, "Bonifazio di Pitati" 38–53, at 52; for a revision and a discussion of Ludwig's identifications see Faggin G., "Bonifacio ai Camerlenghi", *Arte Veneta* 17 (1963) 79–95; and Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 404.

11 For the architecture of the Palazzo in general, see Hamilton P.C., "The Palazzo dei Camerlenghi in Venice", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42 (1983) 258–271; for a reconstruction of the location of offices within the building, see, most recently Cottrell – Humfrey, *Bonifacio de' Pitati*; and additionally Ludwig, "Bonifazio di Pitati" and Cottrell, "Corporate Colors" 658–678.

12 Currently, the palazzo and its façade are being renovated. I have not been able to find out whether the fresco will be restored, too.

13 Hamilton, "The Palazzo dei Camerlenghi" 258.



FIGURE 4.2 Anon. and Guglielmo dei Grigi, Palazzo dei Camerlenghi (1488 and 1525–1528). View from Canale Grande, Venice.

IMAGE © NICOLAI KÖLMEL.

loans.¹⁴ In return for a regular payment of interest, Venetians—most of them members of the patriciate or wealthy citizens—could sign over their property to the state here as a loan. In times of peace, these bonds guaranteed the donor a secure and profitable regular income or—in case of a private financial shortage—could provide him with ready money. Nevertheless, in times of war the *Monte* could also raise compulsory loans that enabled the state to fill its war chest. In fact, the Monte di Sussidio was founded in 1526 to meet Venice's financial needs during the Italian Wars.¹⁵

14 On the Venetian *monti* and public lending more generally, see Luzzato G., *Il debito pubblico della Repubblica di Venezia 1200–1500* (Milan: 1963); Gilbert F., "Venice in the Crisis of the League of Cambrai", in Hale J.R. (ed.), *Renaissance Venice* (London: 1973) 274–292, at 283–286; Lane F.C., "Public Debt and Private Wealth particularly in 16th-Century Venice", in Tenenti B. (ed.), *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Toulouse: 1973) 317–325; Lane F.C., *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, MD: 1973) 324–331; Pezzolo L., "Bonds and Government Debt in Italian City-States 1250–1650", in Goetzman W.N. – Rouwenhors G. (eds.), *The Origins of Value: The Financial Innovations that Created Modern Capital Markets* (Oxford: 2005) 145–165, at 148–149.

15 Lane, *Venice* 325.

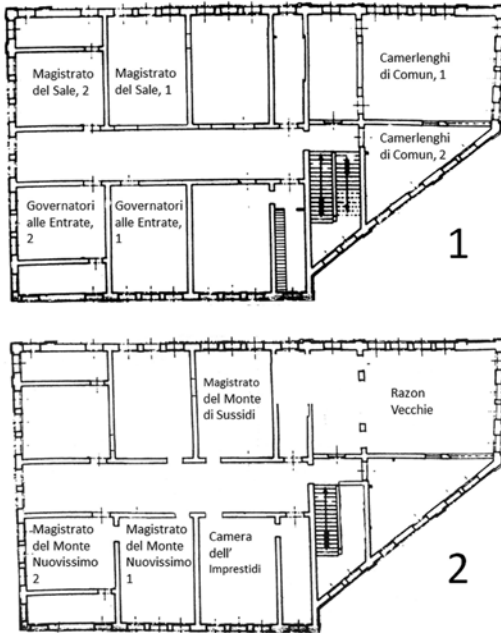


FIGURE 4.3
Floorplan, Palazzo dei Camerlenghi (1488 and 1525–1528) from Cottrell P. – Humfrey P., Bonifacio de' Pitati (Treviso: forthcoming) with friendly permission of the authors.

IMAGE © PHILIPP COTTRELL.

Unfortunately, the pictorial decoration of the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi was dispersed after the end of the Venetian Republic in 1797. Out of originally more than two hundred canvases, only about half have actually survived. Nevertheless, a large part of the decorative scheme could be reconstructed. Based on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century inventories and due to the measurements and the particular arched form of the canvases, Philip Cottrell managed to identify a considerable number of paintings and their original location.¹⁶ As his reconstruction shows, the decoration followed a main principle for each office: On each side, one or two canvases—each depicting standing life-size saints—flanked a central panel with a narrative or allegorical subject [Fig. 4.4]. These central panels often interacted with each other as religious-political allegories of financial and economic weal.

Apart from efforts to reconstruct the original decoration of the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, the research thus far has mainly concentrated on formal or stylistic questions. More recently, scholars have also focused on those who commissioned the paintings, discussing them in the context of corporate

16 See, most recently, Cottrell – Humfrey, *Bonifacio de' Pitati*; further Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 139–199 and 393–416; Cottrell, “Corporate Colors”; Ludwig, “Bonifazio di Pitati” 38–55.

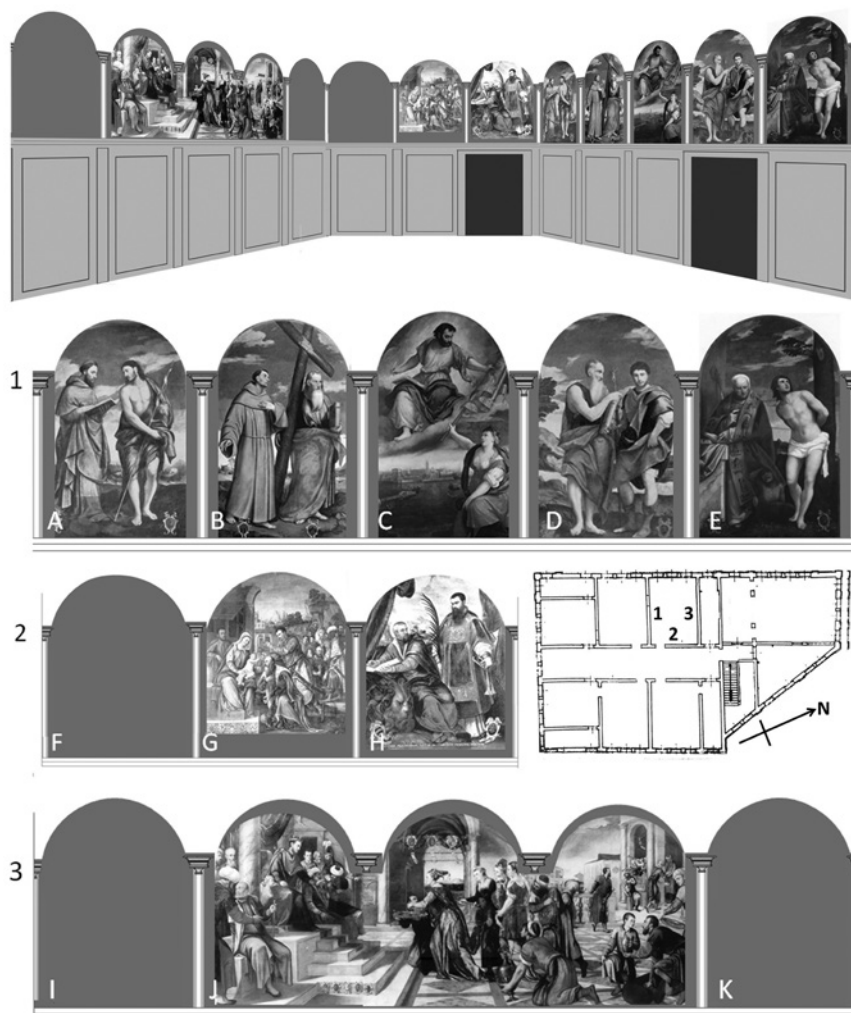


FIGURE 4.4 Reconstruction of the Magistrato di Monte di Sussidio, from Cottrell P. – Humfrey P., Bonifacio de' Pitati (Treviso: forthcoming) with friendly permission of the authors.

IMAGE © PHILIPP COTTRELL.

patronage and patrician self-representation.¹⁷ According to their work, the painted titular saint often functioned as a substitute for the respective office holders. In return for financing the pictorial decoration of their offices, the respective coats of arms or titular saints commemorated their sixteen-month terms of office and their service for the republic. Surprisingly, far less research has been conducted to date on the programmatic coherence of the paintings and the representation of civic ideals in the decoration of the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi.¹⁸

In the case of the Monte di Sussidio, all three central canvases have fortunately survived: an allegorical scene of *St. Mark Handing over his Standard to Venice* (1531–1532) that hung on the wall on the left [Figs. 4.5, 4.4C], an *Adoration of the Magi* (1558) originally made for the wall above the entrance [Figs. 4.6, 4.4G], and finally, the *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* on the right-hand side [Figs. 4.1, 4.4J].¹⁹ All three visualize the function of the site where they were displayed and depict personifications of Venice in

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- 17 Cottrell – Humfrey, *Bonifacio de' Pitati*; Cottrell, “Corporate Colors” 662–663; Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 145–151; Cottrell P., “Poor Substitutes: Imaging Disease and Vagrancy in Renaissance Venice”, in Nichols T. (ed.), *Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2007) 63–85; Ludwig, “Bonifazio di Pitati” 37–38; Faggini, “Bonifacio ai Camerlenghi” 79–95; Kleinschmidt I., “Gruppenvotivbilder venezianischer Beamter (1550–1630) im Palazzo dei Camerlenghi und im Dogenpalast”, *Arte veneta* 31 (1978) 104–118.
 - 18 Some individual paintings—such as for example Vittore Carpaccio's *Lion of St Mark* (1516) or Bonifacio de' Pitati's *Christ and the Adulteress* (1544)—have been discussed in the context of civic representation. See for example Nicholls A., “The Luxury of Adultery: The Iconography of Christ and the Adulteress in Sixteenth-Century Venice”, *Artefact—Journal of the Irish Association of Art Historians* (2009) 69–81 or Cottrell, “Poor Substitutes” 72–74 or his interpretation of Vitruvius Buonconsiglio's *Allegory of the Monte Nuovissimo* (1559) in Cottrell, “Corporate Colors” 662–663. But very often the concrete context of the paintings and their iconographic function within the respective office is neglected. This is even more astonishing since the political messages of other pictorial circles have attracted historians and art historians for a long time. See, for example, Sinding-Larsen S., *Christ in the Council Hall: Studies in the Religious Iconography of the Venetian Republic*, Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia 5 (Rome: 1974); Wolters W., *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes: Untersuchungen zur Selbstdarstellung der Republik Venedig im 16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden 1983); Nichols T., *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity* (London: 1999); Korsch E., *Bilder der Macht: Venezianische Repräsentationsstrategien beim Staatsbesuch Heinrichs III. (1574)* (Berlin: 2013).
 - 19 Cottrell – Humfrey, *Bonifacio de' Pitati*; Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 190–193, 403–404; Ludwig, “Bonifazio di Pitati” 46–53.



FIGURE 4.5 *Bonifacio de' Pitati, St. Mark Handing his Standard to Venice (1531–1532). Oil on canvas, 220 × 134 cm. Galleria dell'Accademia, in deposit of the Cini Foundation.*

IMAGE © GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA, VENICE.



FIGURE 4.6 *Workshop of Bonifacio de' Pitati, Adoration of the Magi (1558). Oil on canvas, 185 × 160 cm. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia.*

IMAGE © GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA, VENICE.

a more or less religious environment. In the religious-political allegory *St. Mark Handing over his Standard to Venice*, we see Saint Mark hovering above the lagoon. The city in the background can be clearly identified as Venice as seen from high above the Bacino di San Marco. Leaning forward, the Saint passes his flag on to a kneeling woman below him. Dressed in rich golden cloth, this figure can be easily understood as Venetia, the personification of the city. Thus,

the Evangelist's patronage over Venice is staged as a heavenly gift to the city, and the city in turn is understood as St. Mark's representative in the world.

A similar strategy for directing the beholder's visual understanding was employed in the *Adoration of the Magi*. Again it is Venice—now in the guise of the Mother of God—who is receiving a present, in this case the precious gifts of the Magi. It was common practice in Venice to regard the Virgin Mary as a personification of the city: first, because of the legendary foundation of the city on the 25 March—the day of the Annunciation—and second, because the city had never been conquered. Venice adopted Mary's attributes, as it were, and staged herself as a pious, serene, and immaculate city.²⁰ In a traditional understanding of biblical exegesis, the Magi in the *Adoration* represented the gentiles who accepted the 'true faith' and recognized heavenly supremacy over worldly authority. In their function as a tribute, the gifts contributed to the dignity of Christ and his mother: The more precious the gifts were and the further away they and their donors came from, the greater the power of Christ must be. In the context of the Monte di Sussidio, the gifts by analogy glorified the city in the guise of the Virgin. And as the patrician patrons inscribed themselves in the painting with their coats of arms and perhaps even in crypto-portraits in the Magi's entourage, they fashioned their term of office as a pious donation to the Venetian state.²¹ However, the *Adoration of the Magi* not only commemorated the service of Venetian patricians in the bureaucracy, it also transformed the financial transaction that a customer would carry out in the Magistrato del Monte di Sussidio. The painting turned a simple deal, that is, the purchase of public debts—be it for profit or by order of the state—into a pious gift and a virtuous donation to the common good. Performative aspects supplied by the institutional architecture of the Monte di Sussidio reinforced this understanding. Since the ground floor housed the debtors' prison, every visitor to the office had to pass the cells, and the prisoners in them, before accessing the staircase leading to the upper storeys, making the consequences of improper behaviour amply apparent. A patrician would still bear in mind

20 Fortini Brown P., *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven, CT – London: 1996) 38–42 and 100–103; Rosand, *Myths of Venice* 13–25.

21 For the identification of the donors and their coats of arms, see Ludwig, "Bonifazio di Pitati" 53; Moschini Marconi, *Gallerie dell' Accademia* 64–65; Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 404. For crypto-portraits in Venetian art, see Huse W. – Wolters W., *The Art of Renaissance Venice: Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, 1460–1590*, trans. E. Jephcott (Chicago, IL – London: 1993) 240–252; Kleinschmidt, "Gruppenvotivbilder".

the fate of the convicts while he literally elevated himself above them climbing the steps to the second floor. Even in times of forced loans, the involuntary financial transaction would nevertheless have appeared as a good and rightful donation. In the light of the *Adoration of the Magi*, it might have shone like one of the Magi's pious gifts, or even brighter.

Compared with these two paintings, the *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* is by far more complex. As I will point out, the allegorical depiction of Venice here is not a mere personification, but is instead achieved chiefly through the interaction of various figures—especially the two main characters: Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Both partly symbolize the virtues of the city, but their full significance only unfolds in a crossfade of their iconographic attributes and traditions.

In typological biblical exegesis, one interpretation of the story of the meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba saw it as an antitype to the Adoration of the Magi.²² Solomon, as a just and wise king, was recognized as a prefiguration of Christ and the queen as an antitype to the Magi. According to this tradition, we would expect a narrative similar to that in the Adoration: The queen coming from afar with her precious gifts would underline Solomon's dignity and the king would function as a personification of the city. In fact, Venice incorporated Solomon and his paradigmatic virtues of wisdom and justice into its *cultural imaginary background* in various ways. Solomon himself was recognised as a paradigmatic example of a wise and just sovereign.²³ His famous judgment settling the dispute between two women—each insisting that she was the mother of the child in question—was seen as an archetype of rightful jurisdiction. In pretending to cut the baby in two, Solomon forced the two opponents to reveal their true feelings towards the child, and by this evidence identified the actual mother. Venice adopted this proverbial wisdom and justice in its state iconography, as can be seen in the nearly life-size sculptural group of the *Solomonic Judgement* (1430–1440) in the northwestern

22 For the various antitypes to the meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, see esp. Mielke U., "Saba, Königin von", in Kirschbaum E. (ed.), *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* (Rome et al.: 1972) 1–3; Watson, "Queen of Sheba" esp. 116–118; Kleinert, *Das Rätsel der Königin von Saba* 46–49.

23 For the iconography of Solomon more generally, see Kerber B., "Salomo", in Kirschbaum, *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* 15–24. For a different iconography indicating Solomon's wisdom and justice, see Michael Schaffner's analysis concerning the motif *Shooting at Father's Corps* in this volume.



FIGURE 4.7 *Bartholomeo Bon (attributed), Judgement of Solomon (ca. 1430–1440). Istrian limestone, height ca. 180 cm, Venice, Northwestern corner of the Doge's palace.*

IMAGE © NICOLAI KÖLMEL.

corner of the Doge's palace towards the Piazzetta [Fig. 4.7]. Even the Doge's palace and its iconographic emphasis on justice were understood in analogy to Solomon's residence. The Venetian Porta della Carta (1438–1440) linking the Palazzo Ducale and St. Mark's Basilica was regarded as the equivalent of biblical reports of a connection between Solomon's Palace and the Temple.²⁴

²⁴ Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall* 147; Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity* 24; Rosand, *Myths of Venice* 13, 25–36, 96–116; Howard, *Venice and the East* 180–183; Landwehr A., *Die Erschaffung Venedigs: Raum, Bevölkerung, Mythos 1570–1750* (Paderborn: 2007) 329, 339.

Nevertheless, there is serious pictorial evidence against such a facile identification: The common iconography of the meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba usually shows the queen and her followers as the party coming from afar. As in the painting for a Venetian *cassone* attributed to Tintoretto [Fig. 4.8], the motif was staged as parallel to the Adoration of the Magi. The queen's followers are marked as foreigners by their different garments, skin colour, and exotic gifts. Solomon and his men are dressed in contemporary Venetian or pseudo-antique costumes. The painting for the Monte di Sussidio significantly inverts this attribution. While Solomon's entourage is in large part dressed in Ottoman garments, the queen and her followers here seem to be Venetian. The gifts the queen is about to present are golden vessels and vases in a contemporary or at most Roman classical style, not the ivory and cinnamon of Tintoretto's picture.²⁵ The tradition of depicting the city's personification enforces an understanding of the Queen of Sheba as Venetia. Not least because of her garments, the queen even interacts directly with the female personification of Venice receiving the standard of St. Mark on the opposite wall [Fig. 4.5].

A close look at a version of the theme that Bonifacio's workshop made for the Zecca—the Venetian mint—further suggests that the Queen of Sheba was regarded as the personification of the city [Fig. 4.9].²⁶ Despite some stylistic differences, the Zecca painting roughly follows the same compositional idea and narrative. Again, the setting is clearly a Venetian one. In the background we recognize the centre of the city, the Piazzetta, as seen from the Bacino di San Marco. We can identify the columns, the Zecca, the Campanile and the Clock Tower—the famous Torre dell'Orologio. What is missing from this view are the two most prominent buildings, St. Mark's Basilica and the Doge's palace, the very heart of Venice and her government. Since both are located

25 The only exotic gift might be the object held by the queen's female servant in the blue dress. Because of the poor condition of the canvas, the colours have faded or changed. Despite its dark brown colour today, the object might once have been white and was supposed to be seen as made of ivory. Nevertheless, it is not raw ivory in its original shape as a tusk, but an Oliphant. In contrast to Tintoretto's paintings, for instance [Fig. 4.8], it is already crafted and might be better understood as a Venetian version of the 'rarieteyten van dese landen' as which Claudia Swan has described exotic objects in a Netherlandish context. See Swan C., "Birds of Paradise for the Sultan: Early Seventeenth-Century Dutch-Turkish Encounters and the Uses of Wonder", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 29 (2013) 49–63. For ivory objects and especially for Oliphants in the Renaissance, see Shalem A., *The Oliphant: Islamic Objects in Historical Context* (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2004).

26 For the painting, see Ludwig, "Bonifazio di Pitati" 53, 59–60; Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 361–364.



FIGURE 4.8 *Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti) (attributed), The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (ca. 1544–1545). Oil/tempera on panel, 157 × 29 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (inv. no. GG3830).*

IMAGE © KHM, WIEN.

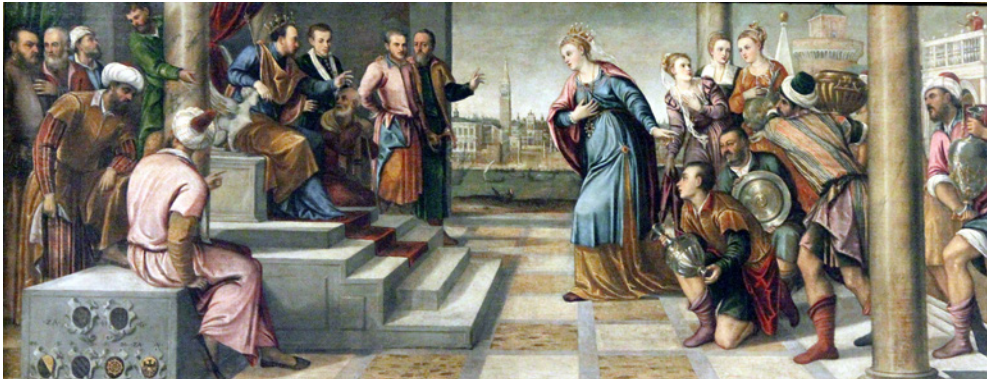


FIGURE 4.9 *Workshop of Bonifacio de' Pitati, The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1557). Oil on canvas, 77 × 133 cm. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia, in deposit of the Frari Church.*

IMAGE © GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA, VENICE.

behind her in the picture, the queen literally stands in as a representation of the city's political and ritual centre. In her red and blue robes, she even alludes to the Holy Virgin and thus to the iconographic tradition of Mary as a personification of Venice.

But this identification would be inconsistent with the two other canvases from the Monte di Sussidio, *St. Mark Handing over his Standard to Venice* and the *Adoration*. Venice would appear here as the presenter rather than the presentee. She would, moreover, appear rather submissive, since she is about to kneel down to offer the king her crown and sceptre. And finally, Venice would hand over her royal insignia to a somewhat Ottoman King Solomon, or—if we translate his name into Turkish—to Suleiman, the Ottoman Sultan at that time. On these grounds, it becomes rather delicate to view the picture as a Venetian

self-representation: On the one hand, Venice is closely linked to Solomon. As the story tells us, the event takes place in his palace in Jerusalem, and as the picture shows, this palace is located in Venice. The painting thus contributes to the *imaginary background* of Venice as a just and wise city and to its status as the second Jerusalem. Strikingly, this Venice is nevertheless staged at the same time as a partially eastern city. Dressing Solomon's entourage in Ottoman garments underlines a Venetian self-understanding that cannot be described adequately in terms of an east-west dichotomy or a (hostile) Ottoman 'Other'.²⁷ Instead, Bonifacio's painting contributes to a *cultural imaginary background* in which the eastern Mediterranean is incorporated into the Venetian self-image. On the other hand, we also see a personification of the city in the guise of the Queen of Sheba—a rich and powerful queen who displays her legendary wealth with her precious gifts. In her allusions to the Holy Virgin, she also represents some of the crucial Venetian self-attributions such as purity, serenity, and immaculacy. It seems strange, then, that this Venetia would be staged as awkwardly submissive and giving away her crown and sceptre.

To understand this dialectic of oddities, we have to take a step back from the literal sources. Instead of a typological understanding and an iconographical meaning, we should view the motif against the background of crossfading pictorial connotations. That is, we have to look at paintings that have different implications when viewed in their literal sense, but which so closely resemble one another in their pictorial narration that they could be confounded and reciprocally transmit their meanings. Wolfgang Wolters has pointed to this popular Venetian technique of *innuendo*. By taking over motifs, arrangements, and compositions from popular pictorial types, new pictures adopted those meanings and connotations or—as I would say—shared their *cultural imaginary background* by allusion or crossfading.²⁸

Virtuous Allusions: From Venice to Persia and Back

If we compare *The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* and Venetian paintings showing *Esther before Ahasuerus*—for example Antonio Palma's version of the story—the similarities in their pictorial concepts are

27 For entanglements on the level of concrete actors, see Benedikt Bego-Ghina's chapter in this volume.

28 Huse – Wolters, *The Art of Renaissance Venice* 297.



FIGURE 4.10 Antonio Palma (Antonio Negretti), *Esther before Ahasuerus* (1574). Oil on canvas, 170.2 × 312.4 cm. Sarasota, FL, Ringling Museum (inv. no. SN85). IMAGE © RINGLING MUSEUM, SARASOTA.

striking [Fig. 4.10].²⁹ In this particular depiction, as in many others, the subject can hardly be distinguished from *The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*. A young, crowned woman accompanied by her luxuriously dressed retinue kneels down before a king on a throne. While the king is about to stand up, he points his sceptre in the queen's direction and interrupts her submission. Were it not for the missing gifts, we could easily mistake the subject. Luckily, in Antonio Palma's version an inscription on the base of Ahasuerus's throne identifies the subject beyond any doubt.³⁰ However, in paintings like Tintoretto's panel—today in the Courtauld Institute—the topic remains completely ambiguous [Fig. 4.11]. Often, the lack of gifts or the clothing worn by Ahasuerus

29 For Antonio Palma and the painting, see Cottrell, *Bonifacio's Enterprise* 359–360; Ivanoff, “Antonio Negretti detto Antonio Palma” 379–399 and most recently the catalogue entry in Brilliant V., *The Ringling Museum: Catalogue of Italian, Spanish, and French Paintings* (forthcoming) with further literature. I am most grateful to the author for the permission to use her manuscript.

30 It reads ‘CORUIT HESTER / CUM VIDIT / REGEM IN / SOLIO / MAIESTATIS / SUAE’ (‘Esther prostrates herself on seeing the king enthroned in all his majesty’).



FIGURE 4.11 Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti), *The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba or Esther and Ahasuerus* (1545). Oil on canvas, 17.2 × 49.3 cm. London, Courtauld Institute (inv. no. P1978.PG457).

IMAGE © SAMUEL COURTAULD TRUST, THE COURTAULD GALLERY, LONDON.

and his entourage are the only hints. As described by the Deuterocanonical Book of Esther, the event took place at the Persian court.³¹ In keeping with this location, it was common practice to dress the Persian king or his entourage with turbans and caftans, whereas Esther as a Jewish woman—and in contrast to the pictorial tradition of the Queen of Sheba—usually appears in contemporary or pseudo-antique garments.

However, as similar as the two pictorial narrations *Esther before Ahasuerus* and *The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* may be, the slight iconographic variations indicate significant differences in the narrative contents. While the Queen of Sheba and Solomon are both regarded as equally positive protagonists, Esther is undoubtedly the only hero in her legend. Having discovered a conspiracy at the Persian court, in which the king's prime minister planned to exterminate all Jews living in the kingdom, Esther appears unsummoned before Ahasuerus's throne. Trembling with fear, she enters the throne room although she knows that this is normally punished by death. Nevertheless, she takes the risk, the king forgives her, and she succeeds in saving her people. Because of her bravery, she was considered one of the nine worthy women in Christian tradition since the fourteenth century.

But there is even more to say about the caftans and turbans worn by Solomon's entourage in Bonifacio's painting for the Monte di Sussidio. The

31 For a brief discussion of the literal sources in the Deuterocanonical version of the Book of Esther, see Brilliant, *The Ringling Museum*.

similarities in the pictorial narration and the slight alteration to the iconographic attributes incorporate Esther's altruistic virtues into the story of the Queen of Sheba. We now find not only a Venetia in the guise of the Queen of Sheba, but also a Queen of Sheba in the guise of Esther. The innuendo to the story of Esther is well suited to the motif of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in a finance office where Venetians 'selflessly' gave their property to grant credits to their state.

Based on the previous discussion, we can now identify two principal layers of self-representation. First, there are the Venetians represented in the Queen of Sheba. Here, the goods they brought to the Monte di Sussidio are depicted as pious gifts and sacrifices for the common good. A contemporary beholder would even have noticed a moral appeal: In the background on the right, a figure is clearly carrying his burden—a large silver tray—in the wrong direction. As he is about to put the object of his desire aside, the bearded man in front of the palazzo tries to lead him back onto the right path with an unambiguous gesture. Yet in this understanding, Venetia gives her goods away not as a submissive victim, but as a heroine. As Esther, she is ready to sacrifice herself (or at least her goods) for the community and the common good. This sacrifice is most obvious in the foreground on the right, where a Venetian father is giving away the last family silver, taking a small vessel out of a nearly empty bag. During the Italian Wars (1508–1556), Venetians without cash were asked to pay their taxes or to buy forced loans with silver or gold household objects.³² The exchange of glances between father and son suggests that this sacrifice will pay off in the future. The painting thus contributes to a *cultural imaginary background* of the citizens' dedication to their city. After the Battle of Agnadello (1509), and especially during the war against the League of Cambrai, (1508–1516) Venice staged herself as beset by enemies but still unconquered because of her just government and virtuous citizens.³³

The second layer of Venetian self-representation does not show Venetia giving away her property as a tribute to a dominant, supreme power, but to Venice herself—a Venice that is equally present in Solomon and his Ottoman dressed entourage. This is the Venice where Solomon's palace is located, a Venice that is understood as a second Jerusalem and incorporates Solomon's proverbial wisdom and justice. And if a beholder looked at the gifts from a more allegorical point of view, he might have seen a further virtue. Because of the golden jugs and jars she bears as gifts—the common attribute for the personification

32 Gilbert "Venice in the Crisis" 284.

33 Gilbert "Venice in the Crisis" esp. 277–280.

of temperance—a knowledgeable beholder could have identified the Queen of Sheba as a *Temperantia* as well. This cardinal virtue is echoed in the whole painting, for example in the diagonal line of view running from Solomon's gesture of appeasement to the queen's (rejected) generous offer of her crown and sceptre to the modest donation by the father giving away the family silver. A contemporary beholder could therefore even see the painting as a pictorial expression of constitutional justice. The idea that in a just polity every individual has to contribute to the common good is found in scholastic and Neo-Platonic thinking alike.³⁴ In Plato's *Republic* (433a–b), for example, justice is defined as a harmonic interaction of all members of a polity, where every individual contributes his or her own share according to his or her own particular duties and possibilities. As in scholastic theories of the *bonum commune*, the common good is viewed as something over and above the welfare of the individual. And since the common good was regarded as a necessary condition for any true personal good, this meant that every citizen ultimately had to accept (temporary) personal disadvantages for the future benefit of the community and him- or herself.

In Front of Her Husband's House: The *Cultural Imaginary* Background of Dowries

Thus far, Bonifacio's *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* has been set against the *cultural imaginary background* of public self-understanding. In this context, narrative indeterminacy functioned as a matrix to evoke an image of Venice as a just and wise city. The painting both emerged from and contributed to a background of images, notions, and cultural practises that staged Venice as an ideal polity. In turn, the painting also allowed visitors to the Monte di Sussidio to glorify their financial transactions as noble gifts or even heroic deeds. But further cultural dimensions also resonate in the interaction between the king and the queen.

Although the biblical accounts do not speak of matrimony between the queen and Solomon, an understanding of their meeting as an antitype to the marriage of the Virgin enriched the range of typological meanings from the

34 See, for example, Blackstein E., *Der venezianische Staatsgedanke im 16. Jahrhundert und das zeitgenössische Venedigbild in der Staatstheorie des republikanischen Florenz* (Frankfurt am Main: 1972); Muir E., *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, NJ: 1981) 44–48.



FIGURE 4.12 *Francesco del Cossa, The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (around 1450). Tempera/oil on panel, diameter 61cm. Boston, MA, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. no 17.198).*

IMAGE © MFA, BOSTON.

twelfth century onward.³⁵ Such an interpretation is visible in the motif of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba joining hands, for instance in *The Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* by Francesco del Cossa [Fig. 4.12]. With regard to this understanding, a further type of painting became popular in the Quattrocento. As decoration for wedding chests (*cassoni*), the motif of a journey by the Queen of Sheba combined the presentation of gifts with the subject of marriage [Fig. 4.13]. In staging the queen's travel as a bridal procession

35 Mielke, "Saba, Königin von" 1–3; Watson, "Queen of Sheba" 125–128.



FIGURE 4.13 *Apollonio di Giovanni, The Journey of the Queen of Sheba/Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (ca. 1440–1450). Tempera on panel, 44.5 × 150.5 cm. New Haven, CT, Yale University Art Gallery (inv. no. 1871.36). IMAGE © PUBLIC DOMAIN.*

to her groom, her originally diplomatic gifts were transformed into a dowry. Although there is no known Venetian painting depicting a journey of the Queen of Sheba, the motif of the Queen of Sheba presenting her gifts to Solomon appeared repeatedly on sixteenth-century Venetian wedding chests, for example on the panel attributed to Tintoretto [Fig. 4.8]. These chests themselves were a significant part of a bride's dowry. They were not merely containers for the bride's costly possessions but—because of their rich decoration—also important symbols indicating the bride's wealth. Together with parts of the dowry, these chests could be displayed to the public as part of the wedding festivities and were sometimes carried in processions from the bride's father's house to her new home.³⁶ Against this *cultural imaginary background*, it seems

36 For the Cassoni, see Schubring P., *Truhen und Truhenbilder der italienischen Frührenaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Profanmalerei im Quattrocento*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1923); and Baskins C.L. – Randolph A.W. – Musacchio J.M. – Chong A. (eds.), *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, exh. cat., Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum (Boston, MA: 2008); and Bayer A. (ed.), *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY: 2008). On marriage and dowries, see Lablame P. – Sanguineti White L. – Carroll L., "How to (and How Not to) Get Married in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Selections from the Diaries of Marin Sanudo", *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (1999) 43–72; and Chojnacki S. (ed.), *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore, MD: 2000) and esp. the essays "Marriage Regulation in Venice, 1420–1535" 53–75; "From Trousseau to Groomgift" 76–94; "Getting Back the Dowry" 95–111 and "Patrician Women in Early Renaissance Venice" 115–131; see also Ferraro J.M., *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford – New York, NY: 2001); Cristellon C., "Marriage and Consent in Pre-Tridentine Venice: Between Lay Conception

plausible to understand the gifts in the painting for the Monte di Sussidio as a dowry as well.

As the public presentation of the dowry was a not uncommon practice in Venetian wedding festivities, viewing the gifts presented in Bonifacio de' Pitati's *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* as a dowry seems even more plausible. The Venetian diarist Marino Sanudo (1466–1536), for example, reports on a patrician marriage in 1507 where a theatrical performance—a so-called *momaria*—included the presentation of the actual dowry:³⁷

There was a splendid *momaria* about Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece. It should be noted that at the dinner hour, when I was present, about 4000 ducats, part of the bride's dowry, was [sic] brought in six basins. The first one contained gold [coins], the rest [silver] coins. Well done, for those who can afford it!³⁸

Such *momarie* and other theatrical performances were staged at weddings and other occasions and featured episodes of Venetian history, biblical or mythological stories.³⁹ These spectacles were arranged and performed by one of the *Compagnie della Calza*, that is by associations of young patricians dedicated to organising banquets, games, and wedding festivities for the Venetian upper class. One can imagine that the story of the meeting between Solomon and

and Ecclesiastical Conception, 1420–1545", *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 39 (2008) 389–418; and most recently Kirshner, J., *Marriage, Dowry, and Citizenship in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy* (Toronto: 2015).

37 Sanudo Marino, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto* (1496–1533), ed. R. Fulin – F. Stefani – M. Allegri, 58 vols. (Venice: 1879–1903; reprint Bologna: 1969–1970), entry for 14 October 1507, vol. 7, 161. The English translation is quoted from Lablame – Sanguinetti White – Carroll, "How to (and How Not to) Get Married" 48.

38 In order to understand the financial dimension of this dowry, one should know that at the time a servant would have earned 7 ducats a year, a soldier 22, and a non-noble secretary 88, see Finlay R., *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, NJ: 1980) 76.

39 On the *momarie* in general, see Muraro M.T., "La festa a Venezia e le sue manifestazioni rappresentative: Le Compagnie della Calza e le 'Momarie'", in Arnaldi G. – Folena G. (eds.), *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols. (Vicenza: 1976–1986) vol. 3, 315–341. For a detailed description of a wedding with performances showing diplomatic events from Venetian history, see Sanudo, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto* entry for 2 May 1513, vol. 16, 206–207. On this event in particular Lablame – Sanguinetti White – Carroll, "How to (and How Not to) Get Married" 48–53.

the Queen of Sheba was considered a suitable subject for their repertoire for wedding celebrations. The gifts shown in the painting in the Monte di Sussidio would then have referred to dowries in two ways: First, because of the symbolic dimension of the underlying story and second, because of its allusion to actual Venetian wedding festivities.

If we understand patrician weddings in the sixteenth century not so much as private events, but more as a matter of statecraft and policy, the motif of a wedding ceremony seems highly appropriate for a government finance office. The political dimensions become obvious if we take into account that foreign ambassadors were invited to witness the splendid celebrations. Sanudo, for instance, more than once defended the luxury of patrician weddings in the context of Venetian self-representation. In his *Diarii* he describes them as an important part of Venice's imaginary as a wealthy and prosperous city:⁴⁰

Thus I do not wish to omit the many marriages celebrated of late and the many large dowries bestowed in this glorious city of Venice. Although they were very costly for us, they nevertheless took place because of the great wealth found here. The dowries bestowed during these years were very large, nearly all of them more than 3000 ducats, and some amounted to 10,000 ducats and more.

In this understanding, the lavish dowries referred neither to the bride nor to the groom, but to Venice. Only in a just and fair polity such as Venice could such wealth be generated and—in turn—be used, conserved, and increased for the common good. The gifts that the Queen of Sheba offers to Solomon as a dowry in the painting express Venetian splendour and prosperity in much the same way. This splendour fell back on the loans and credits signed in the Monte di Sussidio. Subscribing loans before the painting turned the financial transactions into wedding gifts that contributed to the glory of the city.

Finally, there was also a far more quotidian dimension to the *cultural imaginary background* of marriage and dowry, which becomes apparent in the interaction between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. The functions of dowries in sixteenth-century Venice were far more complex than simple monetary

40 Sanudo, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto* entry for 26 February 1498, vol. 1, 885–886. The English translation is quoted from Lablame – Sanguinetti White – Carroll, “How to (and How Not to) Get Married” 47.

support for the husband.⁴¹ For example, it meant a financial safeguard for the wife—should her husband predecease her—and a resource for her children in any event. Venetian law obliged the husband to guarantee the security of his wife's dowry even with his own property and financial assets.⁴² Ideally, the husband took care of his wife's financial needs as long as they were married, and in the end the complete dowry was returned to her—or her heirs—without any deductions. Such subtle visual comments would already have made the gifts of the Queen of Sheba a highly appropriate motif for the Monte di Sussidio. Public loans, as provided by the *monti*, were based on the same idea: They provided the donor with a regular income and—as a good husband did for his wife—would return the property untouched in the future. But not all husbands respected their wives' property as the law intended, which is why the family of the bride tried to protect the dowry. One solution was to stipulate that the dowry (or parts of it) had to be invested in long-term public loans at the *monti*.⁴³ As integrated assets, they provided the husband with regular payments but made it far more difficult for him to lay his hands on his wife's property.

For a patrician visitor to the Monte di Sussidio, the *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* alluded to many events familiar from his social environment; it referred to noble weddings and their customary celebrations, to theatrical plays performed on these occasions, and even to the judicial framework of Venetian matrimony.

Conclusion

The painting *The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* made by the workshop of Bonifacio de' Pitati for the Monte di Sussidio in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi offers various insights into Venetian society in the sixteenth century. Viewed against its *cultural imaginary background*, the painting can be understood as a focal point of various discourses. For a contemporary

41 There was a strict difference between the dowry and the so called *corredo*. While the dowry was more or less seen as a loan, to be returned untouched after the husband's death, the *corredo* was a gift for the husband. See Chojnacki, "Marriage Regulation" 57; Chojnacki, "From Trousseau to Groomgift" 83–86.

42 Chojnacki, "Getting Back the Dowry" 97; Ferraro, *Marriage Wars* 136.

43 Chojnacki, "Getting Back the Dowry" 105–108; Ferraro, *Marriage Wars* 136–138.

beholder, the indeterminacy in the pictorial narration would have resonated with ideas extending from biblical exegesis to civic self-understanding, from philosophical ideas of justice to social customs and practices in the financial administration.

As part of the picture decoration of a government finance office, Bonifacio's *The Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* should not be seen as mere interior embellishment or a memorial to the patrician office holders alone, but also as an example of Venetian civic self-representation. In the context of the public loans sold at the Monte di Sussidio, the painting functioned as a site of mediation in more than one respect.

Venice is not presented in a fixed personification, but rather in a vivid interaction between the main characters. The mutual interdependency of offering, giving, rejecting and receiving, represents Venice as a dialogic exchange among various protagonists. This dialogue was not even constrained by the picture frame, since it also included adjoining paintings (*St. Mark Handing over his Standard to Venice* and the *Adoration of the Magi*) and familiar pictorial traditions (*Esther before Ahasuerus*) through typological and pictorial analogies, crossfading, and *innuendo* in the conversation. The dynamic self-representation shows a conception of the Venetian state that in itself can be described as a site of mediation: Constitutional rights and civic obligations are not staged as static, but as a process of negotiation and adjustment. In an ideal state, each individual is seen as contributing to the community by his or her own means, possibilities, and duties, and with continual regard to the necessities of the common good. The protagonists in the painting—mainly Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, but also, for example, the father giving away his family silver or the man trying to misappropriate a silver tray who is returned to the proper path—operate in this context as state bodies in an almost Hobbesian sense.

But the painting did not simply reflect the conception of civic justice and constitutional self-understanding, it also formed the environment it was created for. Depending on the point of view, and seen against their *cultural imaginary background*, the objects brought before Solomon's throne appear as diplomatic gifts, indicators of wealth, pious obligations, or dowries. The notions and conceptions associated with their use and value could, by analogy, be transferred, as pious duties to the community, to the patrician's terms of office in the Monte di Sussidio, and the financial transactions conducted in view of the painting.

Most remarkably, this community—as it is reflected in the painting—is portrayed as Levantine. The incorporation of figures dressed in Ottoman garments

into the Venetian self-image counteracts descriptions of the Venetian polity in terms of a dichotomy between West and East.⁴⁴ The positively connoted group of men, dressed in turbans, kaftans, and in one case even the headgear of a Janissary—the Ottoman elite soldiers—reveals that in the mid-sixteenth century, Venetians certainly did not see themselves in strict opposition to Levantine worlds and the Turkish Empire. The Venetian self-image adopted the Mediterranean as a site of mediation, and, as the *Meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* shows, this familiarity could be considered so great that Venice's *cultural imaginary background* as a Levantine city could even fade into its constitutional self-conception.

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Through the Stained Glass: The Basel *Schützenhaus* as a Site of Encounter

Michael Schaffner

Entering the Great Hall of the *Schützenhaus*, the modern visitor is stunned by the visual effects of an early modern practice of gift exchange that persisted for almost half a century. Not unlike a successive layering of sediments, a tight network of social relations and tokens of belonging, but also of acts of distinction and moments of conflict, was created here in the medium of stained glass, and rendered visible over the decades. Today, the hall houses no fewer than three-dozen glass paintings, making it one of the most important early modern series still preserved in a secular building in Switzerland. Commissioned and paid for by the Basel town council as the headquarters for the local marksmanship or shooting society, the *Schützenhaus* was constructed between 1561 and 1564 just outside the city walls, next to the compound where military exercises took place [Fig. 5.1].¹ During the second half of the sixteenth century, it was used as a semi-public space for male bonding, allowing men in dominant social positions to constitute and visibly represent themselves as a group through the act of donating stained glass windows, but also to engage in the martial activity of marksmanship and the conviviality of banquets. However, the medium of stained glass also conveys how the *Schützenhaus* opened up a space of negotiation for urban, regional and interregional encounters. Situated in physical proximity to the city walls, yet clearly outside them, it was in many respects an in between space where people with different social, political, and confessional affiliations, who did not necessarily come together under other circumstances, brought in their own backgrounds and related to each other.

In order to understand how social practices shaped the *Schützenhaus* as a specific site, I propose using the metaphor of the stage. On this stage, the historical actors negotiated their roles, defined the setting, related to multiple audiences, and created possibilities for agency—and they in turn were shaped by the same spaces of interrelationship that they had constituted.²

1 Koelner P., *Die Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft zu Basel* (Basel: 1946) 73–74.

2 For the use of the term stage to describe early modern societies, see the contributions by Benedikt Bego-Ghina and Ivo Raband in this volume. See also: Asmussen T. – Burkart L. –

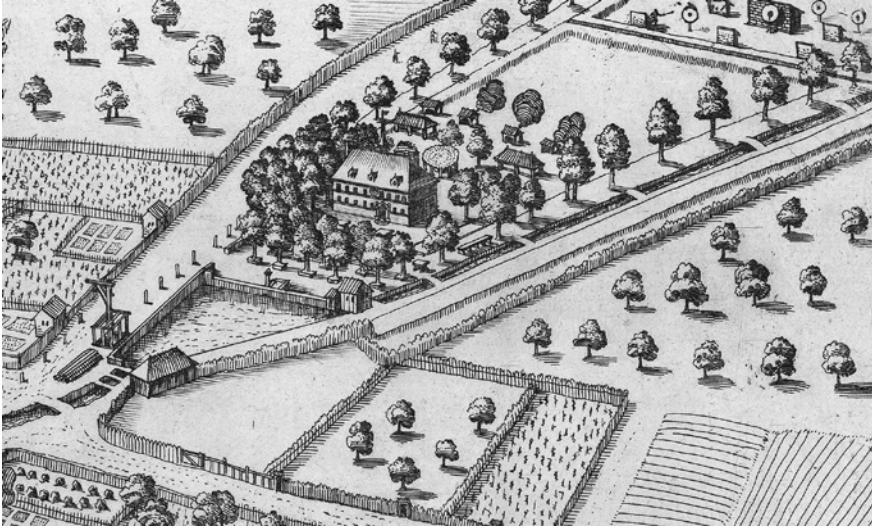


FIGURE 5.1 *Matthäus Merian the Elder, Map of Basel (1615). Engraving, 71.5 × 106.5 cm. Basel, Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt (inv. no. BILD 1, 291). Detail with the house of the Shooting Society.*

IMAGE © STAATSARCHIV BASEL-STADT.

This chapter will reconstruct the *Schützenhaus* as a stage based on an interrogation of the series of glass paintings there. It begins with the more general script that underlay gift exchange at this site: The early modern practice of donating glass paintings and the social networks it helped to organize. Acting on the assumption that gifts serve to bring together persons and objects in different ways, depending on the circumstances of the exchange, I will be discussing the various ‘relational modes’³ that can be observed at the *Schützenhaus*. Their multi-layered nature will become visible through the examination of one rather spectacular entrance on this stage: The paintings commissioned by three members of a Hessian noble family, the brothers Hermann, Kaspar, and Philipp Georg Schenck zu Schweinsberg [Figs. 5.2–5.4]. While Hermann (ca. 1510–1572) was a commander of the Basel house of the Knights Hospitaller, his two brothers occupied positions within the territory of the Fulda monastery in Hesse. The family was connected to the city of Basel in several ways, the most important link being the marriage of Maria Jakobe Schenck zu

Rößler H., “Athanasius Kircher: Ein (Anti-)Held der Wissenschaften und seine Bühnen”, in Asmussen T. – Burkart L. – Rößler H. (eds.), *Theatrum Kircherianum: Wissenskulturen und Bücherwelten im 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: 2013) 7–22, at 17.

3 Davis N.Z., *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: 2000) 9.



FIGURE 5.2 *Ludwig Ringler (attributed), Hermann Schenck zu Schweinsberg's Coat of Arms (1564). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus.*

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL

Schweinsberg to the Basel physician Adam von Bodenstein (1528–1577). As a consideration of the glass paintings donated by these Catholic nobles will show, the *Schützenhaus* may be described as a site where Basel's early modern urban community intensively negotiated its own boundaries.

Overlapping Networks: The Early Modern Practice of Donating Stained Glass

The widespread appearance of small-scale glass paintings in secular buildings is associated with a specific time period and clearly identifiable geographic



FIGURE 5.3 *Ludwig Ringler (attributed), Kaspar Schenck zu Schweinsberg's Coat of Arms (1564). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus.*

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

areas. They became common in the Netherlands, the German South, Alsace and the Swiss Confederation beginning in the late fifteenth century.⁴ In these regions, glass paintings were executed not only for religious buildings, but also

4 On the Netherlands, see Ruyven-Zeman Z. van, *Stained Glass in the Netherlands before 1795*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: 2011). For Switzerland and Southern Germany, see especially the following volumes of the *Corpus Vitrearum*: Hasler R., *Glasmalerei im Kanton Aargau: Kirchen und Rathäuser*, *Corpus Vitrearum*, Schweiz, Neuzeit 3 (Buchs: 2002); Hasler R., *Glasmalerei im Kanton Aargau: Kreuzgang von Muri*, *Corpus Vitrearum*, Schweiz, Neuzeit 2 (Buchs: 2002). See also Mensger A. (ed.), *Leuchtende Beispiele: Zeichnungen für Glasgemälde aus Renaissance und Manierismus*, exh. cat., Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (Tübingen: 2009).



FIGURE 5.4 *Ludwig Ringler, Philipp Georg Schenck zu Schweinsberg's Coat of Arms (1566). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus.*

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

for city halls and university libraries. They adorned guildhalls and inns as well as the urban dwellings of wealthy town councillors and merchants. Some two hundred pieces from between 1550 and about 1650 survive from Basel workshops alone, while the number of known drafts (*Scheibenrisse*) is roughly three times higher.⁵ Stained glass commissions crossed political and religious boundaries: A pertinent example is Basel native Ludwig Ringler (1536–1606), who was active as a glass painter and draughtsman for a diverse range of

5 Moreover, the number of surviving works that originated in other major centres of Swiss glass painting such as Bern and Zurich is considerably more extensive. See Ganz P.L., *Die Basler Glasmaler der Renaissance und der Barockzeit* (Basel – Stuttgart: 1966) 14.

customers including his fellow citizens, members of the southern German nobility, and the Bishop of Basel. In 1563, before receiving important commissions for the Basel *Schützenhaus* in 1564, he had even been asked by the Habsburg rulers to finish a series of glass paintings in the Innsbruck *Hofkirche*.⁶

The main motivation for this substantial production of glass paintings was the practice of panel donations. On occasions such as the completion of a new edifice, the inauguration of a magistrate or a wedding celebration, panels featuring the donor's coat of arms would be commissioned to commemorate the event and visually document the social alliance between the parties involved. In the case of prominent buildings, this would often result in extensive cycles of glass paintings.⁷

The Basel *Schützenhaus* helps to illustrate how this gift exchange worked: After construction work was finished in early 1564, the city council—as was common on such occasions—did not wait for the generosity of potential sponsors. Instead, it formally appealed to the Swiss Federal Diet (*Tagsatzung*), asking its allies for gifts of stained glass on behalf of the shooting society. The idea of reciprocity implicitly resonated in this request, since Basel had donated on numerous previous occasions.⁸ The paintings commissioned by members of the Swiss Confederation and paid for by their respective authorities were known as *Standesscheiben* and followed a relatively fixed format, based on the donor's coat of arms [Fig. 5.5].⁹ Over the next few years, all cantons contributed to the *Schützenhaus*. Most of them offered their gifts in cash, according to a fixed sum that the *Tagsatzung* had introduced; the Basel council could, in turn, invest these sums to commission works from local artists such as Hans Georg Rieher (1538–1614), who produced a major part of the *Standesscheiben* in the house of the shooting society.¹⁰ Because of the high frequency of such donations

6 As far as we know, in the end this cooperation never came about. See Ganz, *Basler Glasmaler* 25. For the mobility of glass painters and their designs, see also Bergmann U. – Hasler R. – Trümpler S., “Glasmalerei über die Grenzen”, in Scholz H. (ed.), *Glas – Malerei – Forschung: Internationale Studien zu Ehren von Rüdiger Becksmann* (Berlin: 2004) 273–280.

7 Hasler, “Glasmalerei in den Kirchen” 6.

8 Landolt E., “Die Fenster- und Wappenschenkungen des Standes Basel, 1566–1626”, *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 34 (1977) 113–136, at 122; Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 255–256.

9 For the format of the *Standesscheibe*, see Schneider J., *Die Standesscheiben von Lukas Zeiner im Tagsatzungssaal zu Baden (Schweiz): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der schweizerischen Standesscheiben* (Basel: 1954).

10 The one exception was Bern, which preferred to send a painting done by one of its own artisans. On the glass painter Hans Georg Rieher, see Giesicke B., *Glasmalereien des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im Schützenhaus zu Basel* (Basel: 1991) 35.



FIGURE 5.5 Hans Georg Rieher (attributed), Coat of Arms of the Canton of Unterwalden (1565). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus.

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

among members of the Confederation, some of the earlier literature has situated the practice of small-scale panel donations almost exclusively within the context of this alliance. As to the ‘relational mode’ created by these gifts, it has been described as a diplomatic means of creating cohesion, especially in times of growing frictions in confessional alignment and political affiliation.¹¹ This interpretation is indeed convincing for the *Standesscheiben*. However,

11 For this interpretation, see especially Giesicke B. – Ruoss M., “In Honour of Friendship: Function, Meaning, and Iconography in Civic Stained Glass Donations in Switzerland and Southern Germany”, in Butts B. (ed.), *Painting on Light: Drawings and Stained Glass in the*

the authorities of the Swiss cantons were not alone in spending large sums of money on stained glass. That individual patrons from a much wider geographical area commissioned these objects becomes clear when we consider the series for the Basel *Schützenhaus*. Of the 38 stained glass paintings in the Great Hall, the *Standesscheiben* account for only roughly one third, while individual commissions by Basel burghers and others contributed the larger part of the paintings. Interestingly enough, important pieces came from non-citizens. These included the aforementioned Hessian family Schenck zu Schweinsberg, but also Nikolaus von Wendelsdorf, a *Vogt* (reeve) and chamberlain in the service of the Bishop of Basel. The Bishop had moved his residence to nearby Porrentruy in the late 1520s, when the city became reformed. The Catholic presence in Basel however did not expire abruptly with these events, as the case of Nikolaus von Wendelsdorf proves: His family later possessed a large mansion within the city of Basel, the *Wendelsdorfer Hof*.¹² Regarding the production process, there were important differences between *Standesscheiben* and glass paintings donated by individual donors. The latter would in most cases contact an artist of their choice directly and have the paintings crafted according to their specifications, resulting in glass works with more varied designs.¹³

Thus over the decades, a heterogeneous group of people left their mark on the windows of the *Schützenhaus*. This constellation was not wholly atypical in the context of early modern shooting societies: In 1606, Henri IV of France donated a glass painting executed by the Zurich glass painter Christoph Murer [Fig. 5.6] to the now-vanished *Schützenhaus* in St. Gall. The inscription reveals that the gift was made in the king's name by his ambassador in the Confederation, Ludovic Lefèvre. Another surviving painting from the same building had been commissioned by a St. Gall master builder and councillor. No longer extant, but documented, is a series of *Standesscheiben* donated by the members of the Swiss Confederation.¹⁴ Also in St. Gall, sponsors from well beyond the context of the urban community joined burghers as donors. Henri IV's

Age of Dürer and Holbein, exh. cat., The J. Paul Getty Museum in collaboration with the Saint Louis Art Museum (Los Angeles, CA: 2000) 43–55.

12 When it was remodelled in the eighteenth century, it became known as *Weisses Haus*. See Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 112.

13 Trümppler S., "Zur Glasmalerei als Kunstform und zu ihrer Technik", in Bossardt J.A. – Kaiser Trümppler A. (eds.), *Glasmalerei im Kanton Aargau: Einführung zur Jubiläumspublikation 200 Jahre Kanton Aargau* (Buchs: 2002) 34–59, at 38.

14 Carlen G., "Der König von Frankreich als Stifter und Schenker: Französische Präsenz im schweizerischen Barock", *Unsere Kunstdenkmäler: Mitteilungsblatt für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft für schweizerische Kunstgeschichte* 39 (1988) 304–322, at 309. For the series of *Standesscheiben*, see Landolt, "Fenster- und Wappenschenkungen" 131.



FIGURE 5.6 *Christoph Murer (attributed), Henry IV's Coat of Arms (1606). Stained glass, 51 × 60 cm. St. Gall, Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum (inv. no. G 19934).*

IMAGE © HISTORISCHES UND
VÖLKERKUNDEMUSEUM, ST. GALL.

panel constituted a diplomatic gift by a monarch who maintained excellent relations with the Swiss Confederation and made extensive donations during his reign to both secular buildings and churches within the territories of its members.¹⁵

Early modern donations of stained glass therefore generated relationships of varying spatial and social quality; they were exchanged within the framework of an urban community, but could also take the form of a diplomatic gift that crossed political and religious boundaries. A closer examination of the interior of the Basel *Schützenhaus* and its glass paintings will show in more detail how this practice was interpreted in a concrete local setting, and how it helped to organize ‘overlapping networks’¹⁶ among various participants.

15 Carlen, “Der König von Frankreich” 304–322.

16 Teuscher S., “Politics of Kinship in the City of Bern at the End of the Middle Ages”, in Sabean D.W. – Teuscher S. – Mathieu J. (eds.), *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development* (New York, NY: 2007) 76–90, at 78. See also Davis, *The Gift* 19–20.

The Basel *Schützenhaus* as a Site of Encounter

The most conspicuous features, which immediately strike any visitor to the Great Hall of the *Schützenhaus*, are the coats of arms occupying the main sections of each glass panel.¹⁷ They are clearly recognizable in their individual designs, even though the paintings are installed slightly above eye level within larger windowpanes [Fig. 5.7]. While the oldest pieces were executed just after the completion of the building in 1564, the most recent painting in the room dates to around 1611.¹⁸ In most of the artworks, the central coat of arms is surrounded by a painted framing structure, which incorporates architectural forms such as columns and arches. Moreover, within this frame the artist executed small figural scenes according to the patron's wishes: Some of them stage narratives from the Old Testament or ancient mythology, others make general reference to the activity of shooting or even to specific festive events that took place at the *Schützenhaus*. These differences in design notwithstanding, the paintings are clearly incorporated into the context of the Great Hall of the *Schützenhaus*, which renders them part of a unique sociable setting. This integration owes much to the fact that all paintings were executed in the same square format.¹⁹ A further feature of the hall reinforced this connection between the paintings and the interior of the *Schützenhaus*: The windows are framed by murals depicting perspectival architectural settings that echo the imagery on the margins of the glass paintings, thereby establishing a dialogue between the windows and the rest of the hall.²⁰

This suggests that we should view these artworks as closely related to the interior in which they were displayed and, consequently, to the convivial events that took place in their immediate environment. One of the most important sources of information about these activities was written by Johann

17 This pronounced emphasis on the coat of arms is typical of early modern stained glass windows, in contrast to medieval ones. See Hediger C., "Überlegungen zur Funktion der Architekturrahmen in den frühneuzeitlichen Schweizer Einzelscheiben", in Sauterel V. – Trümpler S. (eds.), *Les panneaux de vitrail isolés* (Bern: 1991) 167–179, at 172.

18 Although they were all donated for this specific room, the order of the paintings within the hall was changed in the early nineteenth century. Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 73–76. Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 31.

19 The measurements are 32 centimetres in height and width. See Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 29.

20 This mural painting was executed during the 1560s at the same time as the glass paintings and rediscovered during a renovation of the Great Hall of the *Schützenhaus*. Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 31.



FIGURE 5.7 *Anon., Mural Painting (ca. 1562). Basel, Schützenhaus.*

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

Rudolph Sattler (ca. 1577–1628), who recounted the events of the *Grosses Gesellenschiessen* (Great Marksmanship Contest). This event took place in 1605 and was the most extensive, but also the last, major Basel shooting match. The account by Sattler reports that during the *Gesellenschiessen*, the place became a site of public celebration, attracting guests from other regions as well.²¹ The city authorities had sent invitations to numerous cities and territories on this occasion and supported the festivities with funds to house and feed the foreign guests. The shooting match was frequented by participants from many member cantons of the Swiss Confederation, but also by inhabitants of the Margravate of Baden and Further Austria. High-ranking guests such as the Landgrave of Hesse and the ambassador of the King of France contributed by donating prizes for the best marksmen.²²

Smaller such events took place several times during the sixteenth century and Basel marksmen received financial support from the council to attend shooting matches held in other cities. In this way, a ritualized system of visits developed, which had its heyday in the decades around 1550.²³ Apart from these major events, the members of the society who gathered for weekly shooting practice were the typical public that frequented the *Schützenhaus*. But even during these training sessions, Basel citizens were not exclusively among themselves as participants from Basel's environs as well as foreigners living in the city could enter the shooting activities.²⁴ Convivial gatherings took place at the *Schützenhaus* on a regular basis: As the statutes of the society stipulated, the best marksman of the week was required to help prepare the *Abendürten* on the next occasion, a dinner of wine and bread that the shooters shared in the Great Hall of the *Schützenhaus*.²⁵

One of the paintings in the *Schützenhaus* refers explicitly to these activities by commemorating the *Grosses Gesellenschiessen*. It was donated by Onophrion Merian and Jacob Stähelin around the year 1611 [Fig. 5.8].²⁶ The match is depicted in two scenes, while a central cartouche identifies and dates the represented event. The names of the donors who belonged to the

21 Sattler Johann Rudolph, *Außführliche Beschreibung des fürtrefflichen Gesellenschiessens* (Basel, Jakob Trew: 1605).

22 Sattler, *Außführliche Beschreibung* 26.

23 Tlusty A., *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany: Civic Duty and the Right of Arms* (Basingstoke: 2011) 192.

24 Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 77.

25 Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 110.

26 As the text in the two cartouches proclaims, the latter two were replaced in 1672–1674 by two descendants of the original sponsors in the course of restoring the painting. Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 180–185.

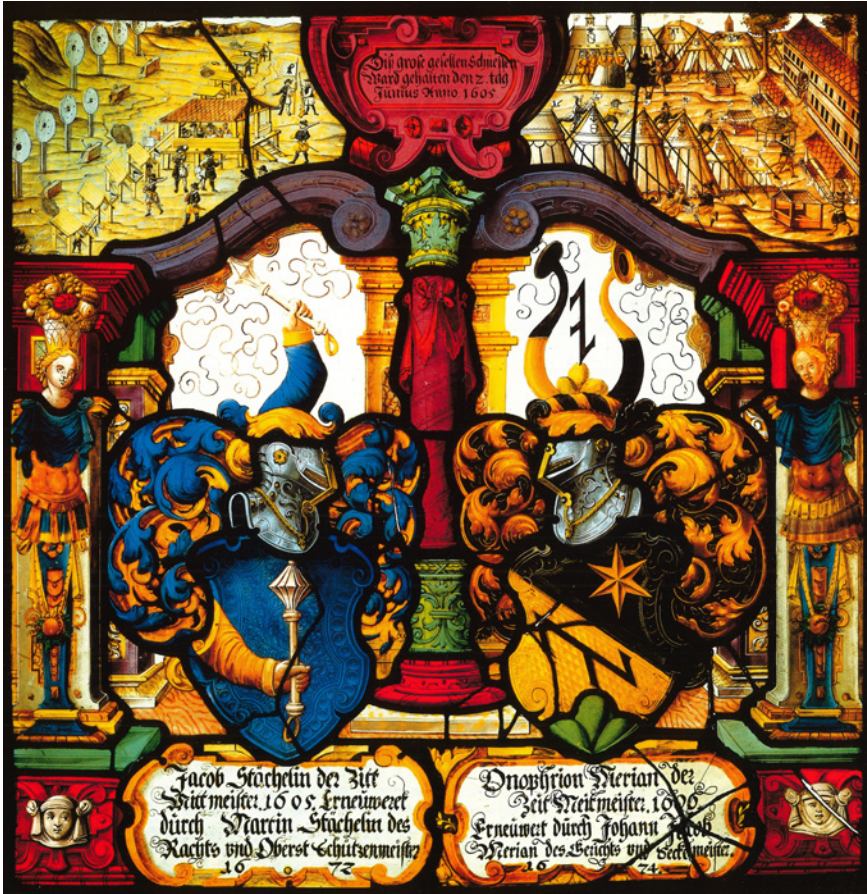


FIGURE 5.8 Hieronymus Vischer, workshop (attributed), Onophrion Merian's and Hans Jakob Stähelin's Coats of Arms (ca. 1611). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus. IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

organizing committee are communicated to the viewer in two inscriptions situated in the lower segments of the painting, referring to their positions as *Schützenmeister* (masters of the shooting society). As in this case, the majority of the stained glass works in the *Schützenhaus* feature two coats of arms, testimony to the fact that the sponsors had shared the substantial costs of donation.²⁷ We can therefore detect multiple references within this painting

27 An important source we have for estimating the cost of a glass painting is the city's account books: For paintings featuring Basel's coat of arms the council regularly paid between six and eight pounds. However, there were considerable differences depending

at the same time: The conspicuous coats of arms contained information concerning the donor and gave him a sort of presence within the *Schützenhaus* even after his death. The text in the inscriptions further unites the two sponsors by referring to the office they both held.²⁸ However, as coats of arms were heritable, they made reference not so much to the donor's physical, but rather to his 'social body'²⁹—his place in a generational succession within a family. Joint donations with two coats of arms therefore expanded this dynastic representation by visualizing a social network, linking two families in the act of sharing the expenses for a donation. In the case of the stained glass depicting the *Grosses Gesellenschiessen*, it represented the alliance between the two Basel families of Merian and Stähelin, which began to occupy key roles in the government during the seventeenth century.³⁰ The *Schützenhaus* glass paintings therefore not only situated their donors within the shooting society, they rather defined a site where the Basel elite represented itself in its mutual interconnectedness before a heterogeneous audience. This is underlined by the fact that of all paintings commissioned by Basel burghers up until 1612, only two were not joint donations.³¹

It is striking that the works of stained glass commissioned by non-burghers, in contrast, were most commonly donated by a single individual or family. This is true for the three members of the Schenck zu Schweinsberg family, but also for Nikolaus von Wendelsdorf. Their paintings feature only one coat of arms, which as a consequence was larger in size than those in joint donations. Especially in the case of the three Hessian donors, this resulted in a very strong visual presence of their heraldic signs within the Great Hall of the

on the glass painter and the complexity of the design. See Landolt, "Fenster- und Wappenschenkungen" 116.

28 Apart from the painting donated by Merian and Stähelin, two further pieces make direct reference to their donor's positions within the shooting society. All others give no explicit reason for the act of jointly donating a painting. Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 172–175 and 186–189.

29 Belting H., *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton, NJ – Oxford: 2005) 66.

30 On Onophrion Merian specifically, see Schüpbach-Guggenbühl S., *Schlüssel zur Macht: Verflechtungen und informelles Verhalten im Kleinen Rat zu Basel, 1570–1600*, 2 vols. (Basel: 2002) vol. 1, 148. See also Wichers H., "Merian", in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS), <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D20977.php> (accessed: 02.08.2016); Wichers H., "Stähelin (BS)", in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS), <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D25438.php> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

31 Only the two Basel burghers Balthasar Migel and Eucharius Holzach made individual donations, see Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 158, 176.

Schützenhaus. Even though these glass paintings were executed in exactly the same format as the others, they clearly feature a specific design that set them apart. Based on this observation, we can detect a further ‘relational mode’ that existed alongside the interconnectedness of the Basel elite, although the two were partially overlapping. It consisted in the practice of gift giving as a form of distinction, where historical actors conformed to the role of donor, while at the same time taking the liberty to interpret it in a creative way. This becomes clear when we examine the donations made by the Schenck zu Schweinsberg family.

Framing the Blank: Stained Glass Donations as a Form of Distinction

The Basel glass painter Ludwig Ringler and his workshop executed all three glass paintings sponsored by the Schenck zu Schweinsberg family.³² The paintings feature conspicuous architectural structures, which guide the gaze of the beholder through arches housing the donor’s lavish coats of arms. The cross visibly identifies Hermann as a Knight of St. John, as does the inscription in the lower part of the painting. Letters on a painted epitaph introduce Philipp Georg as a Dean of the monastery of Fulda, while Kaspar’s painting gives only his name and the date of the donation. The open areas created by the pillar construction are left blank in all three paintings. With regard to the craftsmanship required to accomplish such a panel, it is important to note that this transparency was a relatively new feature for small-scale heraldic glass paintings, virtually unknown before the middle of the sixteenth century.³³ Traditionally, most panels offered a more compact impression, which was due to their backgrounds, which imitated the textile surface of damask. This can be observed in the *Standesscheibe* donated by the canton of Unterwalden to the *Schützenhaus*. In contrast, large transparent sections allow more sunlight to enter the interior. In the paintings commissioned by the Schenck zu Schweinsberg brothers, this effect was further reinforced by the reference to classical architecture, which opens up a third dimension in the panels. Ringler’s compositions were clearly informed by the medium of print, especially by Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554) and his *I sette libri dell’architettura* (*Seven Books of Architecture*), which contains numerous depictions of portal constructions [Fig. 5.9]. This connection

32 Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 103.

33 I would like to thank Rolf Hasler, Vitrocentre Romont, for discussing the notion of ‘openness’ in Ringler’s glass paintings with me. See also Mensger, *Zeichnungen für Glasgemälde* 13; Ganz, *Basler Glasmaler* 9.

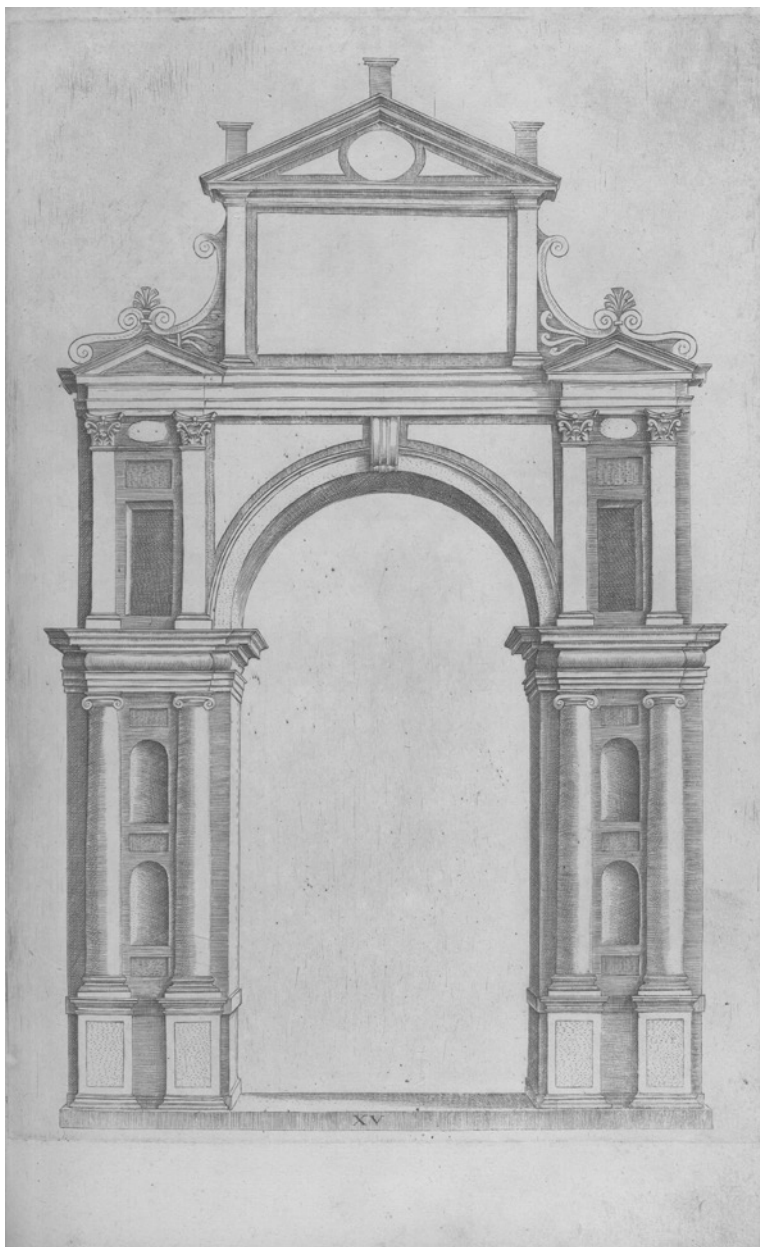


FIGURE 5.9 *Anon. (engraver), Portal construction, in Sebastiano Serlio, Extraordinario libro di architettura di Sebastiano Serlio (Lyon, Giovanni di Tournes: 1551). Engraving, 36 × 22 cm. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (BS UB Js I 20: 3).*

IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.



FIGURE 5.10 *Ludwig Ringler (attributed), Nikolaus von Wendelsdorf's Coat of Arms (1566). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus.*

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

is underlined by the fact that a compendium containing several illustrated Italian and French editions of both Serlio and Vitruvius was circulating in Basel during the sixteenth century. One of its owners was the Basel master carpenter Matthäus Rippel, which proves that Serlio's works were known among the city's artisans.³⁴

Within the *Schützenhaus*, two further paintings by Ludwig Ringler feature similar architectural frameworks [Figs. 5.10, 5.11]: While the abovementioned

34 The volume is now in the Basel University Library (BS UB Js I 20:1–4). On Rippel, see Strübin Rindlisbacher J., *Das Zunfthaus zu Weinleuten in Basel* (Basel: 1977) 155.

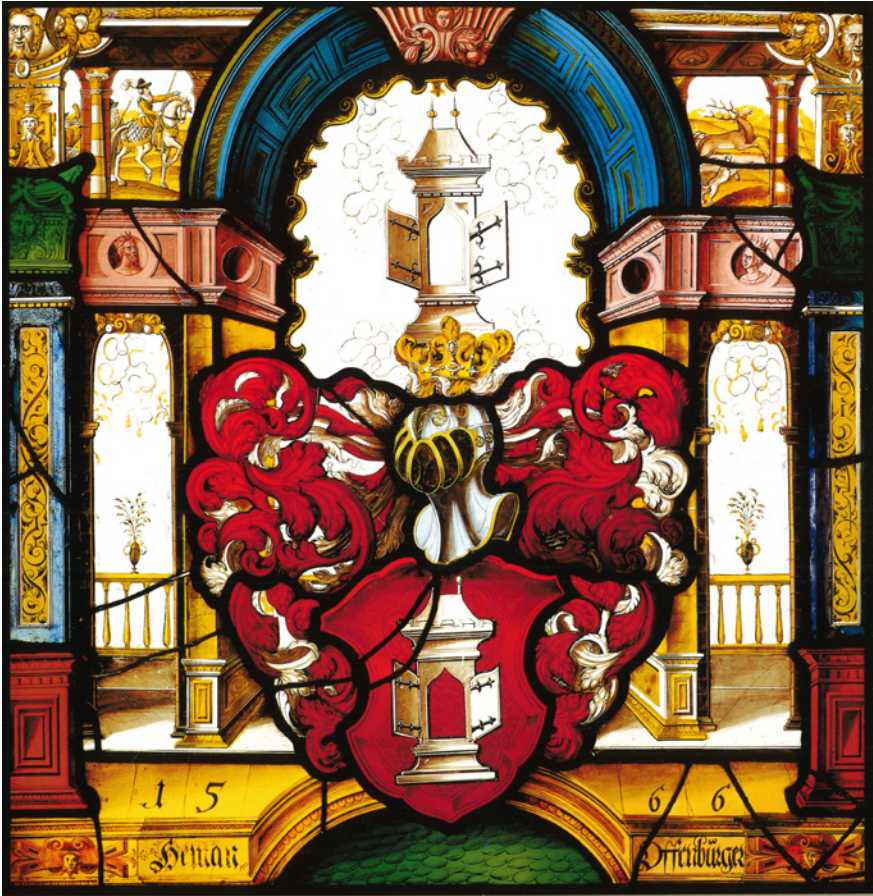


FIGURE 5.11 *Ludwig Ringler (attributed), Henman Offenburg's Coat of Arms (1566). Stained glass, 32 × 32 cm. Basel, Schützenhaus.*

IMAGE © GESELLSCHAFT DER FEUERSCHÜTZEN, BASEL.

Nikolaus von Wendelsdorf was the donor of one of them, the other commemorates Henman Offenburg. Offenburg was a burgomaster of Basel in 1542 and died eight years prior to the execution of this painting. His sons most probably commissioned the artwork in his memory, including themselves within the representation by virtue of the centrally placed heraldic sign of the Offenburg family.³⁵ Both of these artworks were commissioned in 1566, two years after the first two paintings donated by the Schenck zu Schweinsberg family. Based on their similar design, we can assume that Wendelsdorf's and Offenburg's

35 Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 114.

paintings were responses to the donations made by the Hessians. However, both of these later paintings feature a much simpler figural programme, and the three-dimensional character of the architecture is also less prominent. The Schenck zu Schweinsberg brothers thus positioned themselves as the forerunners of a distinguished group of patrons that had engaged Ludwig Ringler and his workshop to design their paintings in the 'modern' style of Serlian architecture.³⁶ Other surviving pieces outside the *Schützenhaus* that were executed by the same artist confirm this argument, since illustrious personalities such as the Basel collector and university professor Bonifacius Amerbach (1495–1562) were among his clients.³⁷ Through their commissions at the *Schützenhaus*, the three Hessians associated themselves with an upmarket Basel clientele, while retaining a very distinctive style of their own. A closer examination of this family's interactions with the city of Basel will make clear that these donations also addressed a situation of conflict and competition.

Taking Part While Remaining Outside? Basel and the Schenck zu Schweinsberg Family

The relationship of the Schenck zu Schweinsberg family to the city of Basel may be described on several levels: It can be grasped most clearly with regard to Hermann Schenck zu Schweinsberg in his role as a commander of the Basel Hospitaller house, which he had occupied since 1560.³⁸ Their Catholic confession notwithstanding, the Knights of St. John were allowed to maintain a presence in the city even after the Reformation in 1529, when the Basel council seized most of the property of the religious orders situated within the city walls. In June 1530, the burgomaster reached a compromise with the Order's superior authorities, stipulating that the house of the Basel Hospitallers continued to exist independently, but had to deliver an annual proportion of its revenues to the city under the name of *Schirmgeld*.³⁹ In these negotiations,

36 On the 'modern' character of Serlian architecture in the mid-sixteenth century, see Heuer C.P., *The City Rehearsed: Object, Architecture, and Print in the Worlds of Hans Vredeman de Vries* (London: 2009) 87.

37 Wackernagel W., "Bonifacius Amerbach und seine Wappenscheibe von 1560", *Jahresbericht der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel* (1959–1960) 111–136.

38 Schenck H.G., *Der Johanniter-Komtur Hermann Schenck zu Schweinsberg: Ein Beitrag zur Familiengeschichte* (Constance: 1982) 7. Hermann was buried in the choir of the Order's church in Basel.

39 For a brief synopsis, see Wyss G., "Das Ritter-Ordenshaus St. Johann und die Stadt Basel", *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 37 (1938) 167–193, at 186–187.

the position of the Basel Hospitallers was supported by their close connection to the neighbouring Order house of Rheinfelden, which belonged to the Habsburg sphere of influence. Within the seemingly uniform legal topography of early modern Basel, the complex of buildings owned by the Hospitallers thus constituted a special zone to which the council had limited access. A second crucial link between the Hessian family and Basel was established by Maria Jakobe Schenck zu Schweinsberg, the sister of the three donors who in 1565 married Adam von Bodenstein, a Basel physician and university professor. The latter dedicated his edition of the Paracelsian work [*V*]on den kranckheiten / so die vernunft berauben ([*O*]failments which affect the intellect) to his brother-in-law Philipp Georg just one year after the Hessian nobleman had sponsored his glass painting for the *Schützenhaus*. In the dedication epistle, Bodenstein makes explicit reference to the Dean of Fulda as his 'großgünstigen Gvatteren vnnd freundlichen lieben Herrn Schwager' ('most favourable kinsman and dear brother-in-law').⁴⁰ The epistle then goes on to recount in detail Bodenstein's rejection by fellow professors in reaction to his involvement with Paracelsus, which had led to his temporary removal from Basel's *consilium medicorum* in 1564. The reference to the book's patron serves in this context to construct a background against which Bodenstein can build up his own reputation as a physician.⁴¹ In this vein, the Dean of Fulda is called upon as a witness to confirm that the epistle's author had successfully performed alchemical transmutations in his presence, which opponents had accused him of merely feigning. Philipp Georg is referenced in this way as a trustworthy kinsman and close friend, who as Dean of Fulda was also a respectable outside figure above the lowly business of academic strife.⁴²

When the three Hessian brothers commissioned their glass paintings for the *Schützenhaus*, their donations became meaningful in a number of different ways. We have already discussed how they claimed membership in a Basel patronage elite and inspired others to commission similar paintings. Further 'relational modes' become manifest in the light of Maria Jakobe's marriage to

40 Hohenheim Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von, *Deß hocherfahrnesten Medici Aureoli Theophrasti Paracelsi schreyben / von den kranckheyten / so die vernunft berauben [...]* in rechter treuw publiciert / durch Adamum von Bodenstein (Basel, Pietro Perna: 1567) 1.

41 For sixteenth-century dedications, see Davis N.Z., "Beyond the Market: Books as Gifts in Sixteenth-Century France", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 33 (1983) 69–88, at 78.

42 Neumann H.-P., "Wissenspolitik in der Frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel des Paracelsismus", in Jaumann H. (ed.), *Diskurse der Gelehrtenkultur in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ein Handbuch* (Berlin: 2011) 255–301, at 265.

Adam von Bodenstein, since the paintings also reflected the close kinship ties that connected the family to Basel. In this context, the donations addressed a potential source of controversy: The paintings were executed in the same year that Adam von Bodenstein was excluded from the *consilium medicorum* for his involvement with the works of Paracelsus. His position was probably strengthened by the fact that his Hessian relatives were not merely referenced in the dedicatory epistle to one of his publications, but also claimed a prominent visual presence within the representation of the Basel elite.⁴³

The figural programmes of the glass paintings donated by Hermann and Philipp Georg allow for the intense negotiation of two further fields of conflict: The situation of the Knights of St. John as a transregional mode of social organization in the sixteenth century, and the matter of generational succession, both within urban and aristocratic contexts. A close examination of their marginal scenes will illustrate how the depicted narratives addressed issues that extended beyond the Basel context and at the same time took part in negotiating the *Schützenhaus's* relation to the urban community.

Distant Battles, Nearby Gunshots: Negotiating the Relationship between Inside and Outside

In both upper corners of the painting commissioned by Hermann, a narrative scene is rendered in considerable detail. It represents a naval battle between Ottoman ships and a fleet commanded by the Knights of St. John. Despite its small size, there are half moons recognisable on the sails of the Ottoman vessels, and crosses on the banners of the Christian ships. Cannonballs fired by the Christian combatants can be seen flying through the air [Fig. 5.12].

This scene deviates from the design of other glass paintings that members of the Order commissioned for religious contexts during the sixteenth century, as these most often featured the Order's patron saint, John the Baptist.⁴⁴

43 The *Eheberedung* (marriage contract) that Bodenstein had entered into with the Hessian family gave rise to a legal dispute as late as 1576, however. The Schenck zu Schweinsberg family was even forced to seek the support of the Basel authorities, since Bodenstein had failed to attend to his duties concerning the payment of a sum stipulated by the contract. The *Eheberedung* as well as two letters from the Schenck zu Schweinsberg family are preserved in the Basel State Archives: StaBS, Adelsarchiv S 7 (Schenk von Schweinsberg, 1565–1576). See also Giesicke, *Glasmalereien* 106.

44 Hediger C., "Für irdischen Ruhm und himmlischen Lohn: Stifterdarstellungen von Johannitern in der Schweizer Glasmalerei", *Jahresheft der Ritterhausgesellschaft Bubikon* 73 (2010) 6–20.



FIGURE 5.12 *Detail of Fig. 5.2: Naval battle.*

The painting thereby adapts to the secular context for which it was executed, and to the fact that overt representations of saints were usually avoided in stained glass donations to Protestant cities. While abandoning some typical iconographical elements, the painting nevertheless emphasizes issues that were important for the Knights of St. John in the middle of the sixteenth century. The Order's old self-legitimation as a protector of pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land had been decisively weakened by the fall of Rhodes to the Ottomans in 1522. At the same time, the Knights were under pressure from secular authorities of all confessional alignments that were seeking to enforce

their jurisdiction within increasingly unified territories.⁴⁵ From the loss of Rhodes onward, the Order was therefore forced to adopt a different strategy of argumentation to justify its very existence. This consisted in emphasizing events both temporally and geographically distant: The role the Knights had played centuries ago in the Crusades as well as their current importance as a naval force operating from their new headquarters in Malta.⁴⁶ Towards the middle of the century, this justification was increasingly propagated through the medium of print. In this context, in 1556 the Basel printer Johannes Oporinus issued an edition of a description of the fall of Rhodes composed by the Hospitaller Jacobus Fontanus from Bruges.⁴⁷ Its editor dedicated it to Adam von Schwalbach, commander of the Order's house in Tobel (Thurgau). The dedicatory epistle addresses von Schwalbach as 'sacrae Ioannitarum adversus Turcos militiae Equiti primari[us]'⁴⁸ ('one of the most distinguished men within the holy forces of the Knights of St. John, against the Turks'), thereby situating the Order within a long tradition of fighting against the Ottoman threat. The Order deployed this self-image throughout Europe when faced with claims by secular authorities, in some cases—as in the Netherlands—in concert with the Teutonic order.⁴⁹ Hermann Schenck zu Schweinsberg's painting, with the naval battle it features so prominently, introduced this broader argument to the context of the Basel *Schützenhaus* and translated it into the medium of stained glass. As a donation from a member of a Catholic order, the panel gained additional meaning because of Basel's specific confessional situation. As a reformed urban community, it still had to define its position towards the Bishop of Basel, the city's former ruler. Only in 1585 was this constellation finally clarified by the treaty of Baden, according to which the city was forced to pay a high sum of compensation for the Bishop's legal

45 Rödel W.G., "Die Johanniter in der Schweiz und die Reformation", *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 79 (1979) 13–35, at 25.

46 Mager M., *Krisenerfahrung und Bewältigungsstrategien des Johanniterordens nach der Eroberung von Rhodos 1522* (Münster: 2014) 69–72.

47 Fontanus's chronicle was edited together with other texts in the following volume: Laonicus Chalcocondyles Atheniensis, *De origine et rebus gestis Turcorum libri decem*, ed. and trans. Conrad Clauser (Basel, Johannes Oporinus: 1556).

48 Laonicus Chalcocondyles, *De origine et rebus gestis* fol. 2ar.

49 See, for example, Mol J.A., "Trying to Survive: The Military Orders in Utrecht, 1580–1620", in Mol J.A. – Militzer K. – Nicholson H.J. (eds.), *The Military Orders and the Reformation: Choices, State Building and the Weight of Tradition* (Utrecht: 2006) 181–201, at 191, which discusses the argumentation adopted by Hendrick Berck, commander of the Utrecht house, when confronted with the claim put forward by the Calvinist authorities to supersede the Order's activities.

titles, which it had appropriated as securities over the years. By doing so, Basel secured its independent position, but at the same time also abandoned its own claims to further influence in the neighbouring episcopal territories.⁵⁰ Two years after Hermann, Nikolaus von Wendelsdorf donated his painting to the *Schützenhaus*, which was executed by Ludwig Ringler and designed after the model of the first commission. As Wendelsdorf was in the service of the Bishop of Basel, the Catholic presence within the shooting society's house became even stronger, creating a site just outside the Basel city walls where the relationship between the confessions, but also between the city and its territorial neighbour and rival, the prince-bishopric, was negotiated.

But the boundaries between Basel's urban community and the *Schützenhaus* as a site were also not unambiguous, especially when it came to the council's entitlement to enforce its will there. This becomes obvious in the donation made by Philipp Georg Schenck zu Schweinsberg in 1566, which revolves around the issues of kinship, fatherhood, and generational succession. On both sides of the framing columns, it portrays a parable known as 'Shooting at Father's Corpse' [Fig. 5.13]. This narrative was originally conveyed by the Talmud, but from the fourteenth century onward can be found in Bible illustrations as a complement to the judgment of Solomon (1 *Kings* 3).⁵¹ It concerns the conflict among three princes engaged in competition over the succession to their late father's throne. As arbiter in their case they accept a foreign king, who advises them to remove the royal corpse from its grave and to shoot arrows at him. The status of legitimate heir would be granted to the archer who hit closest to the late king's heart. Only the youngest of the sons refuses to take part in this procedure out of reverence for his father, whereupon the arbiter decides to award the crown to him.⁵²

The most influential version of this narrative at the time of the creation of the panel was printed in Basel. In 1565, Theodor Zwinger published the first edition of his famous *Theatrum Vitae Humanae* (*The Theater of Human Life*) in

50 Berner H., 'Die gute correspondenz': Die Politik der Stadt Basel gegenüber dem Fürstbistum Basel in den Jahren 1525–1585 (Basel – Frankfurt am Main: 1989) 165–185; Bosshardt-Pflüger C., "Blarer, Jakob Christoph (von Wartensee)", in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS), <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D17030.php> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

51 Boesch P. "Schiessen auf den toten Vater: Ein beliebtes Motiv der schweizerischen Glasmaler", *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1954/1955) 87–92, at 87.

52 The number of sons as well as their father's exact rank varies between the different versions of the story, cf. Stechow W., "Shooting at Father's Corpse", *The Art Bulletin* 24 (1942) 213–225, at 214.

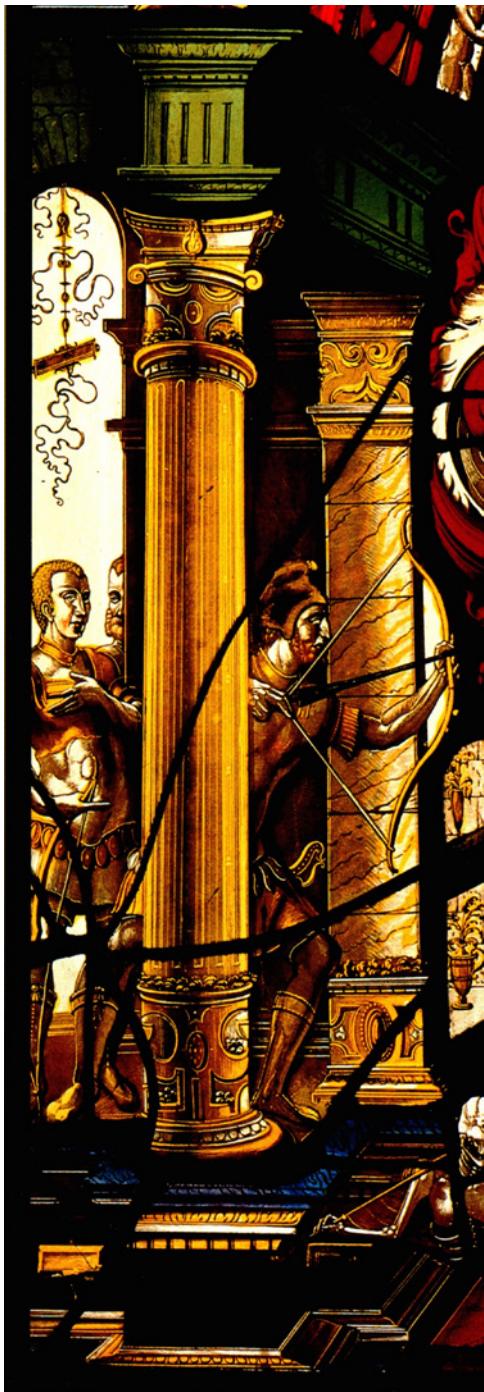


FIGURE 5.13
Detail of Fig. 5.4: Shooting at Father's Corpse.

cooperation with the Froben printing house.⁵³ In accordance with Zwinger's account, the painting stages the events in an antique setting and invests the foreign king with a sceptre and an authoritative hand gesture, indicating his control over the events. The third son, who is not involved in the contest, is barely visible behind one of the columns, which focuses attention on the interaction between the shooters and the arbiter.

A detail of the arch that frames the scenery establishes a connection to the *Schützenhaus* as it features fighting monkeys, one of which wields a weapon similar to the rifles used by the members of a sixteenth-century shooting society [Fig. 5.14]. Are the monkeys mocking the royal sons and their ambition—or are they instead alluding to the activities at the *Schützenhaus*? The painting probably does both at the same time: By representing brotherhood, it explicitly points to a kin relationship that shooting societies throughout the German speaking area had actively appropriated for themselves since the late Middle Ages. In this vein, the statutes of the Basel society refer to its members as *gesellschaftsbrieder* ('society brothers'),⁵⁴ thereby underlining the fact that they



FIGURE 5.14 Detail of Fig. 5.4: Fighting monkeys.

53 Zwinger Theodor, *Theatrum Vitae Humanae, omnium fere eorum, quae in hominem cadere possunt, Bonorum atque Malorum Exempla historica* [...] (Basel, Johannes Oporinus – Ambrosius Froben – Aurelius Froben: 1565); Representative of the vast literature on the *Theatrum* is Blair A., "Historia in Zwinger's *Theatrum Vitae Humanae*", in Pomata G. – Siraisi N. (eds.), *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA – London) 269–296.

54 Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 115.

were meant to cross the divisions introduced by guild membership and economic standing. This differentiated them from the language of urban councils, whose official mandates claimed an essentially fatherly role for themselves.⁵⁵ However, the competition among brothers depicted in the glass painting as well as the resulting implicit patricide offers an ambivalent commentary on this symbolic generational succession within the early modern city.

In fact, the relationship between the Basel shooting society and the city authorities was problematic in several respects. In the second half of the century, the latter increasingly issued mandates in order to control the activities carried out within the newly built edifice and its surroundings. Although the shooting masters were in most cases also town councillors, high-stakes gambling and excessive drinking and the attendant occasional outbreaks of violence proved especially difficult for the authorities to control.⁵⁶ The Basel *Schützenhaus* therefore represented a conflict of interests, which involved male citizens who were active in the shooting society as *brothers* while participating in the city government as *fathers*.⁵⁷

The narrative of 'Shooting at Father's Corpse' was invested with an intriguing new semantic content in the context of early modern urban societies. This is further underlined by the circumstance that during the following decade, and especially in the seventeenth century in the German South, the motif became especially prominent within glass panels donated to the houses of shooting societies and within contexts of legal practice.⁵⁸ But the panel's depiction of brotherhood is striking in another way as well: The number of three princely contenders for the throne corresponds to the brothers Hermann, Kaspar, and Philipp Georg—and to the three fighting monkeys depicted in the painting. In combination with the narrative, the centrally positioned coat of arms, as

55 Tlustý, *The Martial Ethic* 191.

56 Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 77.

57 For similar conflicts in the urban community of early modern Augsburg, see Roper L., *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London – New York, NY: 1994) 109.

58 See Boesch, "Schiessen auf den toten Vater" 90. Boesch lists seven Swiss glass paintings from the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that make use of the motif (not including the Schenck zu Schweinsberg panel in Basel, of which he was unaware). Among these works is a panel in Wellhausen (Thurgau, 1680) as well as a further piece for the shooting society in Wil (canton of St. Gall, 1607). Sketches for glass paintings are extant from throughout the Upper Rhine and Switzerland. Moreover, a Basel medal cast by an unknown artist and dated around 1590 shows the narrative on its reverse, while the obverse displays the judgment of Solomon, see Winterstein C., *Die Basler Medaillen: Kleinkunst aus vier Jahrhunderten* (Basel: 2012) 31.

a heritable sign, draws further attention to the issue of the intergenerational transfer of privilege and property, and to the problem of succession in a noble dynasty. Thus while establishing a close connection to the setting of an urban shooting society, the depicted narrative once again also points to the donor's own background.

In June 1572 the Basel council felt obliged to issue a mandate against what it called the 'vnordnung'⁵⁹ (disorder) caused by 'frömbdt vnd heimbsch' (foreigners and citizens) in the *Schützenhaus*. According to its reprimanding remarks, even on days without any scheduled shooting exercises the building was open until late at night for anyone wishing to indulge in wine drinking and gambling. Two groups were singled out as especially problematic in this context: foreign journeymen and peasants from the immediate vicinity of the city. The council described the disorder created through their presence at the *Schützenhaus* using a comparison with strong confessional overtones. They were said to behave as if participating in a 'külwy', a secular festivity held on the occasion of the anniversary of a church's dedication. Popular throughout the German-speaking lands since the late Middle Ages, Protestant authorities in particular tried to repress these celebrations as sources of profligacy and heresy.⁶⁰ In order to remedy what it saw as an abuse of the *Schützenhaus*, the council ordered the doors of the building to be kept strictly closed whenever no shooting was taking place, and obligated the shooting masters to exercise their supervisory duties more carefully. However, it is unknown whether the council's intervention had made any significant impact.⁶¹

Even though the council's point of view is necessarily completely different from our contemporary perspective, the mandate also views the *Schützenhaus* as a site of encounter, while regarding the setting as potentially dangerous. Parallel to the practice of donating stained glass panels to this house, the prohibited festivities generated encounters of varying geographical and symbolic scope, involving urban citizens, immediate neighbours, and foreigners, as well as members of both confessions. The mandate once more draws our attention to the special location of this building near the city and yet outside of it; it reminds us of the possibility of various 'relational modes' being created in the act of encounter, including male sociability and distinction, but also conflict

59 StaBS, Vereine und Gesellschaften Q 3, Feuerschützengesellschaft, 07.06.1572. All following quotations are taken from this document.

60 Dubler A., "Kirchweih", in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS), <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D30206.php> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

61 Koelner, *Feuerschützen-Gesellschaft* 77.

and competition. The council's answer to what it saw as harmful intermingling was an attempt to reduce openness by closing doors—only to open them wide again on such occasions as shooting matches like the *Grosses Gesellenschiessen*. As a site of encounter, the *Schützenhaus* was not generated in a situation devoid of power; much like a stage setting, access was limited depending on the actor's capability to fulfil a certain role authorized by the setting. However, as our discussion of the stained glass donations by the Hessian Schenck zu Schweinsberg family has shown, actors entering the stage could also partially rewrite the script and react to each other, and, in the process, change the setting itself. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the *Schützenhaus* thus became a place for negotiating the boundaries of the city and its relationship to its neighbours.

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Zwinger Theodor, *Theatrum Vitae Humanae, omnium fere eorum, quae in hominem cadere possunt, Bonorum atque Malorum Exempla historica* [...] (Basel, Johannes Oporinus – Ambrosius Froben – Aurelius Froben: 1565).

PART 2

Translation, Transmission, Transformation



The *Kux* as a Site of Mediation: Economic Practices and Material Desires in the Early Modern German Mining Industry

Tina Asmussen

‘We’re all people who strive after money, and we desire to become as rich as possible with little effort, with a minimum of labour and in the shortest time possible.’¹ This statement is made by the learned miner Bermannus while explaining the growing popularity of the mining towns in the Erzgebirge to his interlocutors Naeuius and Ancon. These three men are the protagonists in Georg Agricola’s (1494–1555) dialogue *Bermannus or a Dialogue on Metallurgy* (1530). Agricola’s text glorifies mining as a venerable enterprise, and describes the practical skills and the profound knowledge of the nature and composition of minerals and the various technologies needed for their exploitation and extraction and for processing the ores that a learned miner needed. The motive behind all of Bermannus’ explanations about mining, minerals and technology was the desire to get rich. Agricola’s text must be situated in the context of a major boom in silver, copper, and lead mining starting in the second half of the fifteenth century. Economic and social historians have eloquently pointed out how Central Europe entered into a new age of metal where mining ranked among the most important economic driving forces.² Especially between the

1 ‘[...] ut sumus omnes ferè homines pecuniarum avidi, et parvis sumptibus ac labore quam minimo ditescere cupimus’. Agricola Georg, *Bermannus sive de Re Metallica Dialogus* (Basel, Hieronymus Froben: 1530) 25.

2 For the economic development of mining in Central Europe, see Bingener A. – Bartels C. – Fessner M., “Die grosse Zeit des Silbers: Der Bergbau im deutschsprachigen Raum von der Mitte des 15. bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts”, in Bartels C. – Slotta R. (eds.), *Geschichte des deutschen Bergbaus: Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: 2012) 317–453; Bartels C. – Denzel M.A. – Westermann E. (eds.), *Konjunktoren im europäischen Bergbau in vorindustrieller Zeit: Festschrift für Ekkehard Westermann zum 60. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: 2000); Westermann E., “Silberproduktion und -handel: Mittel- und Oberdeutsche Wirtschaftsverflechtungen im 15./16. Jahrhundert”, *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 68 (1997) 47–65; Bartels C., “The Production of Silver, Copper, and Lead in the Harz Mountains from Late Medieval Times to the Onset of the Industrialization” in Klein U. – Spary E.C. (eds.), *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory* (Chicago, IL:

1470s and the 1540s, copper and silver mining experienced a veritable boom in the Saxon and Bohemian parts of the Erzgebirge, the Harz mountains and the Tyrolean Alps. With the aid of increasingly expensive machines and costly ventilation and drainage technologies, tunnels were drilled deeper and deeper into the soil and new mineral resources were exploited, bringing tremendous profits. These manifold technological and metallurgical innovations went hand in hand with significant developments in the organizing, planning, and handling of the mining administration, in infrastructure and workflows as well as in the marshalling of sufficient financial resources for these highly capital-intensive undertakings.³ Several cities in mining regions, such as Freiberg, Annaberg, Marienberg and Schneeberg in Saxony, St. Joachimsthal (Jáchymov) in Bohemia, and Schwaz in the Tyrol, reached impressive dimensions, and became not just important sites of large-scale excavating and processing operations and economic prosperity, but also centres of scientific innovation and cultural production.⁴

A key element within these developments in mining was a financial instrument known as the *Kux* (plural *Kuxe*) [Fig. 6.1].⁵ By the end of the fifteenth century, the practice of buying *Kuxe* had appeared as a legal form in Saxon mining ordinances aimed at guaranteeing the flow of capital for the costly

2010) 71–100; Kellenbenz H. (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Age of Expansion: Papers of the 14th International Congress of the Historical Sciences*, Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte 2 (Stuttgart: 1981); Laube A., *Studien über den erzgebirgischen Silberbergbau von 1470 bis 1546: Seine Geschichte, seine Produktionsverhältnisse, seine Bedeutung für die gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen und Klassenkämpfe in Sachsen am Beginn der Übergangsepoche vom Feudalismus zum Kapitalismus* (Berlin: 1974); Westermann A., *Die vorderösterreichischen Montanregionen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: 2009).

- 3 Sokoll T., *Der Bergbau im Übergang zur Neuzeit* (Idstein: 1994) 17; See also Bingener – Bartels – Fessner, “Die grosse Zeit des Silbers” 317–452.
- 4 Kaufhold K.H. (ed.), *Stadt und Bergbau* (Cologne: 2004); Wilsdorf H., *Kulturgeschichte des Bergbaus: Ein illustrierter Streifzug durch Zeiten und Kontinente* (Essen: 1987); Winkelmann H., *Der Bergbau in der Kunst* (Essen: 1971); Slotta R. – Bartels C. – Pollmann H. (eds.), *Meisterwerke bergbaulicher Kunst vom 13. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Deutschen Bergbau-Museum Bochum 48 (Bochum: 1990); Slotta R., “Der (Silber-)Bergbau als Kunst-Katalysator”, in Slotta – Bartels – Pollmann, *Meisterwerke* 591–618.
- 5 The etymology of the word *Kux* is very unclear and there are several interpretations in the older and more recent scholarship. It most likely derives from the Slavic word *kukux* or *kus*, which meant share, but the relationship to the shareholders of a pit (*Gewerke*) was most probably an innovation of Saxon mining law in the second half of the fifteenth century. See Zycha A., “Das Wort *Kux*”, *Zeitschrift für Bergrecht* 62 (1921) 407–412; Westermann “Silberproduktion und -handel” 57–58; Laube *Silberbergbau* 56, 82–110; Westermann E., “*Kux*”, in North M. (ed.), *Von Aktie bis Zoll: Ein historisches Lexikon des Geldes* (Munich: 1995) 212.

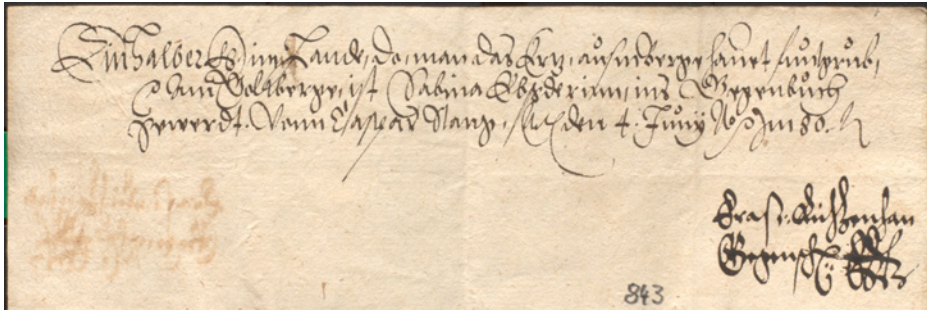


FIGURE 6.1 Ein halber Kux im Lande, do man das Erz ausm Berge hauet fundgruob, 4 June 1580. Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Bergarchiv Freiberg, 40164 Dokumente zum Kuxbesitz, Nr. 843.

IMAGE © SÄCHSISCHES STAATSARCHIV, BERGARCHIV FREIBERG.

mining enterprises. One *Kux* guaranteed profit sharing from the mining of precious and semi-precious ores. Each mine in the districts of Saxony and Bohemia was divided into several *Kuxe*—normally 128—which people of any rank and from anywhere could buy in mining towns and trade fair cities. By investing their money in *Kuxe*, these people became shareholders in a certain mine. This form of investment was extremely successful and spread to all of the major mining districts in Middle Germany and Further Austria. The securities were traded by brokers known as *Kuxkränzlere*. The price of one *Kux* did not depend primarily on the yields of a mine; it was, rather, demand that determined the price, which then marked the viability of *Kuxe* as objects of financial speculation. The yields of each mine in a certain district were published on broadsheets and circulated widely within the mining towns and the trading cities. By buying one or several *Kuxe*, the shareholder was obliged, at least theoretically, to pay for the maintenance of the mine at quarterly rates (*Zubusse*).⁶ In this respect these paper securities differ from today's shares: The buyer of a *Kux* not only purchased a legally warranted hope of profit, but also assumed a financial obligation. In order to manage all administrative matters, some shareholders even engaged local deputies, who were commissioned to make their payments and distribute or re-invest profits (*Ausbeute*).

6 In practice, many shareholders did not pay the rents and lost their claims to profit distribution and the right of ownership of the *Kux*. If no one was interested and the shareholder wanted to re-activate the *Kux*, he had to pay the outstanding balance. The practices of mining investment in the Harz mountains are described in Henschke E., *Landesherrschaft und Bergbauwirtschaft: Zur Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungsgeschichte des Oberharzer Bergbaugesbietes im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: 1974) 293–339.

Within this analytical perspective of early capitalist forms of organization, scholars have invested much effort in studying the developments and consolidation processes of administrative structures, technological innovations, legislation, and financial mechanisms.⁷ The *Kux* is usually introduced as a financial instrument that promoted the transformation of mining from a merely local and family-based to a large-scale enterprise in which many people were financially involved.⁸ The *Kux* enabled investors without any direct connection to the practices of mining and processing ores to benefit from the profits.

But this narrative of early capitalist development does not adequately explain the run on the tiny slips of paper that were the *Kuxe*. It imposes modern perceptions of economic growth and commercial practices on the early modern context.⁹ Examining the social and cultural energies behind the success of the *Kuxe* instead reveals more diverse aspects of human interactions with metallic materials. To take this into account, we need to look more closely at the discourses of finding ores, financial wealth, and profit-making that also motivated the practices of investors. This is still a rather neglected field in current research. In the following, this article concentrates on the practices of the *Kux* trade and reveals how this paper object became a site where economic calculation intersected with the desire for financial wealth and hidden treasures. I will investigate the *Kux* trade as a site of mediation where financial practices and material values were subject to constant contestation and negotiation. By considering the material and affective qualities of the *Kux*, I will analyze how materiality and rationality became inextricably tied up with imaginary, symbolic, and moral issues.

7 See in particular the articles in the following volume: Westermann A. (ed.), *Wirtschaftslenkende Montanverwaltung, fürstlicher Unternehmer, Merkantilismus: Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ausbildung einer fachkompetenten Beamtenschaft und der staatlichen Geld- und Wirtschaftspolitik in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Husum: 2009).

8 Dietrich R., *Untersuchungen zum Frühkapitalismus im mitteldeutschen Erzbergbau und Metallhandel* (Hildesheim: 1991); Werner G.T., "Das fremde Kapital im Annaberger Bergbau und Metallhandel des 16. Jahrhunderts", *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 57 (1936) 113–179; Werner G.T., "Das fremde Kapital im Annaberger Bergbau und Metallhandel des 16. Jahrhunderts", *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 58 (1937) 1–47, 135–201; Westermann "Silberproduktion und -handel" 57; Kroker W., "Leipzig und die sächsischen Bergwerke", *Schriften des Vereins für die Geschichte Leipzigs* 11 (1909) 25–64.

9 Wellmer F.-W. – Lampe W., "Spekulation mit Bergbauaktien/Kuxen im 17. Jahrhundert im Vergleich zu heute: Hat sich die Risikobereitschaft in der Exploration über 300 Jahre verändert?", *Der Anschnitt* 66 (2014) 25–31.

The Social Phantasm of Finding Treasure

As the initial quote made by Bermannus indicates, discussions about material wealth and financial profit were substantial themes within the sixteenth-century literature on metallurgy and mining. It opens a discursive field in which economic developments and questions about wealth were negotiated, and knowledge of new technologies and metallurgical practices was articulated. The majority of these treatises were written by Germans with a personal connection to the mining regions of the Harz mountains around Goslar, the mountains of the Erzgebirge in Saxony and Bohemia, and the Tyrolean Alps, where the entrepreneurial transformation of mining was most prominent.¹⁰ A key element that frames all explanations of the generation and composition of mineral ores and the various technologies needed for their exploitation, extraction, and processing was how to gain access to the subterranean treasures and how to get rich in the process. Finding treasure was an integrative social phantasm, embedded within a contemporary perception of wealth and aspirations towards upward mobility. One of the earliest works in this heterogeneous genre of printed mining literature is Ulrich Rülein von Calw's (ca. 1460–1523) *A well-ordered and useful little book about how to seek and find mines* (*Bergbüchlein*). It directly reflects the contemporary attraction to mining investment and places the quest for treasure and access to wealth at its very beginning. The book was published around 1500, probably in Leipzig [Fig. 6.2]. Rülein von Calw studied medicine at the University of Leipzig and became town physician before being elected city magistrate of Freiberg. In Freiberg he also served as a mathematical practitioner, and was actively involved in the planning of the two new mining towns of Annaberg and Marienberg in the Erzgebirge.¹¹ The *Bergbüchlein* received much attention among contemporaries; it was reprinted no less than nine times before 1540.¹² For his book, Rülein von Calw chose the literary form of a dialogue between a young and uninformed person named Knappius, who is eager to invest in mining, and

10 An excellent overview is to be found in Darmstaedter E., *Berg-, Probier- und Kunstbüchlein* (Munich: 1926); Koch M., *Geschichte und Entwicklung des bergmännischen Schrifttums* (Goslar: 1963); Conolly D.E., "A Research Bibliography of Early Modern German Mining and Metallurgy", in Bork R. (ed.), *De Re Metallica: The Uses of Metal in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2005).

11 Pieper W., *Ulrich Rülein von Calw und sein Bergbüchlein*, Freiburger Forschungshefte, Kultur und Technik D7 (Berlin: 1955); Conolly D.E., "Ulrich Rülein von Kalbe's 'Bergbüchlein' in the Context of Sixteenth-Century German Mining/Metallurgical Literature", in Bork, *De Re Metallica* 347–366.

12 Conolly, "A Research Bibliography" 393.



FIGURE 6.2 Title page to Ulrich Rülein von Calw, *Eyn wohlgeordnet und nützlich büchlein, wie man bergwerk suchen und finden soll* (Worms, Peter Schöffer: 1518). Coloured engraving. Dresden, Universitätsbibliothek (S.B.1079).

IMAGE © SLUB, DRESDEN.

Daniel, a learned man who possesses profound natural-philosophical knowledge combined with the experience of a practicing miner. The text is motivated by Knappius' questions; he wants to know in detail how much profit he will gain from his *Kux* in a certain mine.¹³ Daniel answers Knappius' questions not by quantifying the possible rewards, but by providing him with general information about the generation and growth of mineral ores such as silver, gold, tin, copper, lead, and mercury, how these ores are arranged in the veins of the mountains, and how a miner could locate and extract them.¹⁴ These explanations are intended to help Knappius to invest his money profitably. The Italian practitioner Vannoccio Biringuccio (1480–ca. 1539), author of the *Pirotechnia* (1540), a treatise dedicated to metallurgical practices and to laboratory techniques for processing metals and substances, also shares the idea of the subterranean treasure hoard:

[T]he mountains are the matrices of all the most prized riches and the repository of all treasures, and if you know how to open the way to them with the aid of good fortune and true skill, you not only succeed in arriving at the centre where such things are hidden, but also without doubt you will become rich as the above-named persons or richer, and will adorn yourself with honour, authority, and every other benefit that riches bring, presupposing that benign Nature, who is most generous to those who seek her, promises such things and fulfils her promises abundantly.¹⁵

The mention of the elusive names of mining towns in the Erzgebirge such as Schneeberg, Annaberg or St. Joachimsthal in particular evoked manifold associations among contemporaries. In his *Meisznische Land- und Bergk-Chronica* (*Chronicle of the Lands and Mountains in Meissen*), commissioned by Duke August of Saxony (1526–1586) in the late sixteenth century, the Wittenberg professor Petrus Albinus (1543–1598) mentions the marvellous silver output in Schneeberg in the 1470s. This was so abundant that it became impossible

13 Rüleïn von Calw Ulrich, *Eyn wohlgeordnet und nützlich büchlein, wie man bergwerk suchen und finden soll* (Worms, Peter Schöfer: 1518) fol. 2r.

14 Ulrich Rüleïn von Calw's mining booklet originally appeared around 1500 without date or place of publication. It was immediately reprinted. Eight editions are known for the sixteenth century. See Koch M., *Geschichte und Entwicklung des bergmännischen Schrifttums* (Goslar: 1963) 22.

15 Biringuccio Vannoccio, *De la Pirotechnia*, ed. and trans. C.S. Smith – M.T. Gnudi (New York, NY: 1959) 21.

to transport everything to the mint in order to produce coins (as was usual), and the mines' owners and investors were paid in silver bullion (*Silberkuchen*) extracted from argentiferous lead.¹⁶ He quantifies the financial gain by presenting breath-taking sums and includes a list of citizens and nobles who became enormously rich.¹⁷ One finds many such accounts in the printed mining literature, metallurgical treatises, chronicles, and manuscripts. All of them emphasize how indigent or ordinary people acquired enormous wealth by finding a fertile silver mine, and stress the inexhaustible natural riches still hidden in the earth awaiting discovery.

This longing for treasures was, however, tightly intertwined with ambivalence about wealth within the economic mentality of sixteenth-century society. Material scarcity shaped everyday life and the desired goods were regarded as if they existed in finite quantities and were in short supply. In early modern society, especially in agrarian contexts, the crucial economic issue was perceived as being the division of resources, and this also influenced notions of wealth. Natural resources were perceived as something that could be divided up and distributed. Increases in the overall supply were regarded with suspicion. Scholars have referred to this economic mentality using the terms 'subsistence economy' and 'image of the limited good', but one must deal with these concepts cautiously;¹⁸ although the contemporary economic mentality was shaped by a concept of 'limited good', this does not mean that it guided economic behaviour entirely and prevented people from profit-seeking.¹⁹ The

16 Albinus Petrus, *Meisznische Land und Bergk Chonica* (Dresden, Gmel Bergen: 1590) 28.

17 Albinus, *Meisznische Land und Bergk Chonica* 31–39.

18 Taking up Werner Sombart's concept of *Nahrung*, Winfried Schulze and Renate Blickle have explained that the sixteenth-century economy was primarily oriented towards meeting appropriate needs, which constituted the legally secured ordering principle of all economic activities. See Schulze W., "Vom Gemeinnutz zum Eigennutz: Über den Normenwandel in der ständischen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit", *Historische Zeitschrift* 243 (1986) 591–626; Blickle R., "From Subsistence to Property: Traces of a Fundamental Change in Early Modern Bavaria", *Central European History* 4 (1992) 377–386; Blickle R., "Nahrung und Eigentum als Kategorien in der Ständischen Gesellschaft", in Schulze W. (ed.), *Ständische Gesellschaft und Soziale Mobilität* (Munich: 1988) 73–92. Recent scholarship has criticized this concept as too simplistic and argued that it presents a distorted picture of the economic practices of pre-modern craftspeople and artisans by claiming that they lacked the concepts of competition and market orientation. For the critique, see Brandt R. – Buchner T. (eds.), *Nahrung, Markt oder Gemeinnutz: Werner Sombart und das vorindustrielle Handwerk* (Bielefeld: 2004).

19 Anthropologists have been familiar with the concept of the limited good at least since George M. Foster's study of Mexican peasant society. Foster defined his concept as follows: 'By "Image of Limited Good" I mean that broad areas of peasant behaviour are

sixteenth century was on the whole also a time of discovery, economic expansion, and exploitation. The New World as well as unexplored parts of the old one were imagined as containing inexhaustible resources and challenged the image of the limited good. Proceeding from this economic mentality, it is productive to consider treasure tales in the context of mining, such as the stories about marvellous silver discoveries and lucky investors, as gateways to abundance in a situation of scarcity. By finding unexplored treasure, or by producing riches artificially, for example by means of alchemy or by lucky investment in *Kuxe*, people imagined that they could get rich easily without hard work and without harming others by making them poorer.

The Commodity of Fine Silver Coins Mediated by Paper Shares

For contemporary mining investors, the purchase of mining shares was a promising venture because, if the yields were abundant, they would be paid in good coin with a high precious metal content. These coins were mostly fine silver coins that came directly from the mining town's mint.²⁰ Every significant mining town in Saxony such as Annaberg, Buchholz, Schneeberg or Freiberg, had its own mint before the minting of coins was centralized in Dresden in 1556. The growing popularity of silver coins went hand in hand with the increase in silver production. The idea of a silver coin equivalent to the Rhenish *Goldgulden* emerged in the Tyrol at the end of the fifteenth century (called *Guldiner*), and around 1500 silver coins named *Guldengroschen* appeared in Saxony. They represented the starting point of a gradual replacement of the *Goldgulden* as the leading currency.²¹ Although silver production in the German mining regions

patterned in such fashion as to suggest that peasants view their social, economic, and natural universes—their total environment—as one in which all of the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honour, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply [...]. According to Foster, the lottery, along with treasure hunting, was another acceptable way of increasing one's wealth in the 'limited good' society. Foster G.M., "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good", *American Anthropologist New Series* 67 (1965) 293–315, at 296.

20 Arnold P., "Bergbau und Münzwesen", in Bachmann M. – Marx H. – Wächtler E. (eds.), *Der silberne Boden: Kunst und Bergbau in Sachsen* (Stuttgart: 1990) 42–55, at 43.

21 Rössner P., "Die (proto-)globalen Spannungsfelder und Verflechtungen mitteleuropäischer Münz- und Währungspolitik um 1500: Das Beispiel der sächsischen Talerprägung", in Schattkowsky M. (ed.), *Das Erzgebirge im 16. Jahrhundert: Gestaltwandel einer Kulturlandschaft im Reformationszeitalter* (Leipzig: 2013) 103–157.

increased, there was a constant lack of bullion. Good silver coins were rare items in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century payment transactions. In general, the economic situation during the Central European mining boom was marked by an increase in prices and a gradual debasement of the currency.²² *Good* coins with a high silver content were regularly melted down, silver was extracted for reasons of governmental or personal profit, and *bad* coins with a much lower silver content were produced with some part of the silver. Fine silver coins were therefore perceived as not just good currency, but also a highly desirable commodity.

The economic potential of mining described by authors like Agricola, Biringuccio, Albinus or Rühle von Calw is an idealized one. The mines are seen as inexhaustible sources of mineral resources and bearers of countless financial promises to be fulfilled in future. The treatises therefore mark a discursive tension between the situation of scarcity and redistribution of wealth in the historical present and the desire for an abundance of mineral resources and upward mobility in the present future.

The practices of *Kux* trading within the German mining regions deserve particular attention against the background of bullion scarcity. The *Kuxe* were perceived as a key promising access to subterranean treasures and therefore to wealth, which was not subject to redistribution. The practice of investing in mining must be seen within the context of a huge political debate on currency and coinage. Discussions of the gold, silver, and copper content of coins dominated discourses on mining and the contemporary valuation of metallic ores on the level of both texts and objects. There were continuous negotiations and renegotiations concerning the intrinsic value and exchange rates of coins. After 1511, the monetary authorities obliged the regional mint masters and other experts to collect representative samples from among the coins currently circulating in Saxony almost once a year. On a regular basis, new edicts were issued, new coins introduced, old coins valued or re-valued,

22 Gerhard H.J., "Ursachen und Folgen der Wandlungen im Währungssystem des Deutschen Reiches 1500–1625: Eine Studie zu den Hintergründen der sogenannten Preisrevolution", in Schremmer E. (ed.), *Geld und Währung vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beihefte 106 (Stuttgart: 1993) 69–84; Arnold P., "Das sächsische Münzwesen in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhundert: Die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Bergbau und Münzpolitik in Sachsen", in Naumann F. (ed.), *Georgius Agricola: 500 Jahre* (Basel: 1994) 416–422; Rössner P., "Bad Money, Evil Coins? Coin Debasement and Devaluation as Instruments of Monetary Policy on the Eve of the 'Price Revolution'", in Rössner P. (ed.), *Cities – Coins – Commerce: Essays presented to Ian Blanchard on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (Stuttgart: 2012) 89–119; Rössner P., *Deflation – Devaluation – Rebellion: Geld im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beihefte 219 (Stuttgart: 2012).

and bad coins with a very low precious metal content were prohibited. Within these discourses, the values of raw materials, utility, and exchange overlapped and were intimately linked with moral discourses about honest and deceitful ways of making profit; mint masters and goldsmiths in particular were under constant suspicion of fraudulent silver exports, coin debasement, clipping, and counterfeiting.

Several authorities such as the Martin Luther (1493–1546), Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) and the town physician of St. Joachimsthal, Georg Agricola, elaborated on the subject from their perspectives of theology, political economy, and natural history.²³ Here, they followed the tradition of Aristotelian monetary philosophy and argued for the intrinsic value of coins. Following Nicole Oresme (ca. 1330–1382) they considered the manipulation of currency—particularly debasement/devaluation—as a form of usury.²⁴ In his treatise *De precio metallorum et monetis* (*On the Price of Metals and Coins*, 1550), mining and mineralogy expert Georg Agricola stated, ‘The good coins are treasures (financial assets). Whoever possesses silver and gold coins knows exactly what he has; they have the same value everywhere.’²⁵ Precious metal served as a crucial hinge within the contemporary theory of value, as a symbol and generator of value. Unlike the owners of good coins, those who purchased *Kuxe* did not exactly know what they had. With regard to material value, the *Kuxe* were in themselves highly speculative financial assets, which hints at their precarious nature as value guarantees; their worth is represented by their reference to the precious and semi-precious metals that might be found, since they refer to a longing for abundant extraction and rich yields. At the same time, however, these speculative paper assets were the most important instruments for financing the costly extraction of ores, and the *Kux* trade was secured by territorial rulers. This relationship opens up a discursive field of risk.

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- 23 Kellenbenz H., “Die Vorschläge des Nicolaus Copernicus zu einer Reform des preußischen Münzwesens”, in Kellenbenz H. (ed.), *Dynamik einer quasi-statischen Welt*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beihefte 93 (Stuttgart: 1991) 571–586; Agricola Georg, *Schriften über Masse und Gewichte (Metrologie)*, ed. and trans. W. Fraustadt – H. Prescher, 5 vols. (Berlin: 1959); Luther Martin, *Von Kauffshandlung und Wucher* (Wittenberg, Hans Lufft: 1524).
- 24 Oresme Nicolas, *De mutatione monetarum tractatus/Traktat über Geldabwertungen*, ed. and trans. W. Burckhardt (Berlin: 1999). For further reading, see Mäkelä H., “Nicolaus Oresme und Gabriel Biel: Zur Geldtheorie im späten Mittelalter”, *Scripta Mercaturae* 37 (2003) 56–94.
- 25 ‘Moneta pura thesaurus est. qui enim id genus nummos aureos et argentos possidet, scit quid habeat: et quod habeat ubique tantum valet.’ Agricola Georg, “De precio metallorum et monetis libri III”, in Agricola Georg, *De mensuris et ponderibus Romanorum atque Graecorum lib. V* (Basel, Hieronymus Froben: 1550) 253–340, at 271.

The *Kux* as a Materialization of Risk

As mining became more popular as a form of investment, the number of representations of mining scenes depicting the goddess Fortuna increased. She became a popular emblem of the promises, risks, and uncertainties of mining. The discursive and iconographical traditions of chance in the context of mining are borrowed from the *fortuna di mare* [Fig. 6.3]. The popularity of the maritime Fortuna was closely associated with the emergence in the late Middle Ages of the term risk, which is closely connected with the sea trade and the social group of merchants and sailors. The origins of the term may be found in northern Italian trading towns in the fourteenth century. *Risico* or *risco* meant to venture in the sense of to do something dangerous. The



FIGURE 6.3 *Allegory of Fortune*, in Theodore de Bry, *Emblemata nobilitati et vulgo scitv*, (Frankfurt am Main, Theodore de Bry: 1593). Engraving. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek (M: Uk Sammelbd. 2 /1).

IMAGE © HERZOG AUGUST BIBLIOTHEK, WOLFENBÜTTEL.

word derives from the Greek *rhiza* meaning root (*radix*) but also reef/rocks. In reference to the association of risk with overseas trade, *rischiare* may have meant to navigate in rocky seas or expand into unknown seas.²⁶ Hence the word's emergence was inseparably bound up with the idea of facing uncertainty, and was closely related to economy, trade, and insurance. Through the practice of assessing possible hazards and dangers in relation to expected rewards, risk reveals a calculating and measuring attitude towards nature. With the development of risk in maritime trading centres around 1500, the iconography of Fortuna underwent a notable transformation: She increasingly appeared as a naked and alluring beauty balancing on a globe, while her negatively connoted, severe, and forbidding representation as the goddess of fate faded away. This attractive Fortuna has long flowing hair, which recalls the forelock of the ancient personification of chance and points to a conflation with the ancient god of opportunity (*Occasio*). In her hands she holds a sail filled by the wind, and she stands on a globe symbolising her unsteadiness and dependence on worldly goods.²⁷ As a tempting naked beauty, she points to the affective quality of risk. The attractiveness of her nudity is connected with the attraction of bravely challenging nature in order to seize the moment and grasp every opportunity. The replacement of the wheel by a globe points to another concept of risk and uncertainty. Whereas the wheel represents a cyclical sequence of success and failure, the globe symbolizes constant teetering on the brink of the abyss, which does not inherently integrate the fall as a matter of course. The affective quality of the concept of risk, including daring, desire, hope or fear is neglected in current studies in the field.²⁸ With the growing economic importance of mining, Fortuna rose from the sea to conquer the mountains. The frontispiece of a beautifully illustrated manuscript by Andreas Ryff (1550–1603), a resident of Basel, clearly shows the iconographic connection between Fortuna in stormy waters and practices of mining and

26 Rammstedt O., "Risiko", in Ritter J. (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 8 (Basel: 1992) 1045–1050, at 1045.

27 Meyer-Landrut E., *Fortuna: Die Göttin des Glücks im Wandel der Zeiten* (Munich: 1997) 145–153; Brink C., "Fortuna", in Warnke M. – Fleckner U. – Ziegler H. (eds.), *Handbuch der Politischen Ikonographie*, 2 vols. (Munich: 2011) vol. 1, *Von Abdankung bis Huldigung* 353–359.

28 Although this aspect is addressed from the etymological perspective in recent studies on risk, most authors attach no value to it. Normally, it is a single, passing remark in a paragraph or footnote. See, for example, Koch C.M., *Risiko: Sozialwissenschaftliche, ökologische und systemtheoretische Perspektiven zur Unsicherheit* (Münster: 2013).



FIGURE 6.4 *Fortuna with the coat of arms of Andreas Ryff and mining scene, in Andreas Ryff, Münz- und Mineralienbuch (Basel: 1594). Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (A lambda II 46a).*

IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.

metallurgy [Fig. 6.4].²⁹ Fortuna's image of fragile stability seems to have captured the imagination of those who, like the goddess, had to move quickly to keep on top in the new world of sixteenth-century mining.

The financial practices of the *Kux* trade participated in the transformation of the concept of risk as represented by the allure of uncertainty and the attraction of balancing on the edge of the abyss. It is the alluring quality of the *Kuxe* that transforms them into an even greater treasure than the actual subterranean silver hoards: They were materialized promises to participate in the Saxon treasure hunt without physical involvement. Investors such as Knappius in Rüleln von Calw's *Bergbüchlein* hoped to extract more silver by making a good investment than by mining nature directly—and with less labour. The paper instrument therefore appears as a materialization of Fortuna; the *Kux* symbolizes the attractiveness of risking worldly goods with all its alluring, playful, and moral implications.

29 Ryff Andreas, *Münz- und Mineralienbuch* (Basel: 1594).

Kuxe, Gambling, and Play Money

Stories of disputes, fraud, deceit, and greed are as old as anecdotes about legendary silver outputs. Although sovereigns were eager to guarantee the creditworthiness of their mines, and tried to prevent fraud by regularly enacting new laws regarding the sale of shares, mining was very much associated with uncertainty.³⁰ The oldest book of mining verdicts from Freiberg (*Bergurteilsbuch*, 1476–1484) already reveals a lively *Kux* trade; one can even speak of speculation with mining shares, whereby the value of these securities was based not only on the yields of a certain mine, but also on rumours and promises of rich findings. The prices of the *Kuxe* rose and fell daily, and investment in mining became closely associated with games of chance.³¹ Even Martin Luther, who originally came from the mining region of Mansfeld, mentioned the moral implications of the *Kux* trade. In one of his Table Talks of 1544 he complains, 'I won't have any *Kuxe*! They're only play money and will not prosper!'³²

The *Kuxkränzler* in particular were constantly accused of cheating ignorant investors by selling them overpriced shares in already exhausted mines. To attract foreign investors, they would advertise worthless mines as immense subterranean treasures and spread rumours of undiscovered riches. There were also rumours of deceitful mine foremen who concealed rich veins by plastering them over with clay, earth and stones to make the proprietors believe the mine was exhausted. As soon as the proprietors had abandoned the mine,

30 The mining laws of Saxony, like Elector August's legislation of 1554, sought to combat these fraudulent practices. See paragraph 78 on "Krenzler and Kuckus-Partirer" in Augustus Elector of Saxony, *Bergk-Ordnung durch den Durchlauchtigsten Hochgebornen Fürsten und Herrn Augusten Herzogen zu Sachssen* (Dresden, Matthes Stöckel: 1554) § LXXVII. See also the *Schwazer Bergbuch*, a lavishly illustrated manuscript of 1556, which declares it a sovereign's duty to provide reliable conditions for financial investment: Bartels C. – Bingener A. – Slotta R. (eds.) *Das Schwazer Bergbuch*, 3 vols. (Bochum: 2006) vol. 2, *Der Bochumer Entwurf von 1554 und die Endfassung von 1556* 417. Duke Julius of Braunschweig and Lüneburg intended to create the post of jurist for his mining territories in the Harz Mountains, in order to increase investor confidence and arouse their interest: Bergarchiv Clausthal BaCl Hann. 84a, Nr. 00013/2 No. 66, 31 July 1578.

31 Ermisch H. (ed.), *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Freiberg in Sachsen*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: 1883–1891) vol. 2, *Bergbau, Bergrecht, Münze* 334, no. 62.

32 "Ich will keine Kuks haben! es ist spielgelt, und es will nicht wudeln!" Luther Martin, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Tischreden*, ed. K. Drescher, 6 vols. (Weimar: 1912–1921) vol. 5, 314; Knappe R. (ed.), *Martin Luther und der Bergbau im Mansfelder Land* (Eisleben: 2000); Reizig C. – Müller G. (eds.) *Martin Luther und der Bergbau: Aus Tischreden, Briefen und Predigten* (Wittenberg: 2000).

the foremen took the ores.³³ These rumours led to an increase in or collapse of *Kux* prices and turned the whole investment into some sort of lottery. The Basel professor Philipp Beck, who translated Georg Agricola's *De Re Metallica Libri XII* into German in 1557, mentions in his foreword the huge sum of money he lost when his investments in several mines in the Erzgebirge failed. He justifies his translation of Agricola's text with the hope of preventing ignorant investors from suffering the same misfortune.³⁴ The more they knew about mining, the harder it would be to cheat them. In this text, Agricola makes a clear distinction between gambling and prudent investment. The latter is based on knowledge and information as well as restraint with regard to wealth:

Some owners prefer to buy shares in mines bounding in metals, rather than trouble themselves to search for the veins; these men employ an easier and less uncertain method of increasing their property. Although their hopes in the shares of one or another mine may be frustrated, the buyers of shares should not abandon the rest of the mines, for all the money expended will be recovered with interest from some other mine. They should not buy only high priced shares in those mines producing metals, nor should they buy too many in neighbouring mines where metal has not yet been found, lest, should fortune not respond, they may meet their expenses or buy other shares, which may replace their losses. This calamity overtakes those who wish to grow suddenly rich from mines, and instead, they become very much poorer than before. Thus, in the buying of shares, as in other matters, there should be a certain limit of expenditure which miners should set themselves, lest they throw all their money away, blinded by the desire for excessive wealth. Moreover, a prudent owner, before he buys shares, ought to go to the mine and carefully examine the nature of the vein, for it is very important that he should be on his guard lest fraudulent sellers of shares deceive him.³⁵

If one follows this advice, as Agricola claims, it should be easy to increase one's wealth, and less uncertain than getting physically involved in the business of mining. But what this passage also emphasizes is that anyone who himself engages in the mining business is spared the danger of being cheated. The culture of cheating, deceiving, and gambling within the context of mining

33 Agricola Georg, *De Re Metallica*, trans. H.C. Hoover – L.H. Hoover (New York, NY: 1950) 21.

34 Agricola Georg, *Vom Bergkwerck XII Bücher* (Basel, Hieronymus Froben: 1557) preface.

35 Agricola, *De Re Metallica* 29.

and financial practices was reflected not just in literary sources but also on the material level. In 1539 Wolf Hünerkopf, the local mint master of Annaberg, produced a copper jeton for the mining magistrate of Marienberg, Wolf Thiele.³⁶ Jetons of this sort were often produced for high-ranking mining administrators and mint masters, and served as objects of representation, but also as play money. Hünerkopf's jeton was closely linked to practices of speculation in mining shares in Annaberg and Marienberg, which reached their pinnacle in the 1530s. The inscription transports the notion of a world turned upside down: 'WER VIL. LIG-EN. VND TRGN. KA. DER. IST. ICZT. A.-M. BESTEN. DRAN' ('Whoever cheats and lies the most is the luckiest now'). The jeton demonstratively points to contemporary practices of risk, gambling, and speculation, but as play money with no use as currency it playfully alludes to expectations of profit and greed without practicing them. Compared to the *Kuxe*, the jeton is merely an object of simulation; it represents speculation whereas the *Kux* embodies it. Those who wished to succeed within this climate had to fulfil several requirements. In Agricola's earlier text, the learned miner Bermannus asserts that each person who wants to engage successfully in mining must rely on strong courage and good hope. However, this opinion is strongly disputed by his interlocutor Ancon, who does not see why he should invest so much money in uncertainty and put all his confidence in hope and faith. Bermannus counters:

Your exaggerated caution will always be an impediment! You will never become a good miner and never be rich. With this excessive caution, a farmer would never sow, because he must fear a disaster. Nor would a merchant trade overseas, as he must reckon with a shipwreck. And no one would do military service, as the outcome of every war is uncertain. But everyone relies on hope, and in most cases this works out well. No one has ever accomplished anything with a weak and timid heart, nor will he bring it to a conclusion.³⁷

36 Thiele H., *Der Jeton des Wolf Thiel(e): Betrachtungen zum Erzgebirgischen Bergbau im 16. Jahrhundert* (Kleinvoigtsberg: 1999).

37 'Nimia ista tua providentia obstat, quo minus vel unquam bonus metallicus vel dives quò peripatetico aspirare liceret, fias. Atque hac certe ratione neq; agricola sereret, quia timidenda sit calamitas, neq; mercator navigaret, quia naufragium pertimescendum, neque quisquam in militiam iret, quia incertus sit belli exitus, sed bene sperant omnes et feliciter sæpius procedit, nemo vero animo qui abiecto et timido fuit unquam rem fecit aut etiam faciet', see Agricola, *Bermannus* 30–33.

This reply underlines that not just investment in mining, but also entrepreneurial practices more generally are structured by the connection of risk with future-oriented affects such as daring, hope, and fear. In current research, too, a modernist perspective often connects the emergence of risk with the secularization process and growing self-awareness of tradesmen and merchants. This perspective is characteristic of a scholarly tradition that analyzes the economic, cultural, and scientific practices of historical societies and compares them with a contemporary set of values. In order to encompass the complexity of the affective character of risk within entrepreneurial practices, it is important not to exclude religion as a fundamental structuring principle of early modern societies. For contemporary tradesmen and investors, the Christian virtue of hope (*spes*)—alongside faith (*fides*) and love (*caritas*)—superimposes rational thinking with positive expectations about future happenings based on prognostications and confidence in God's will. Hope means a longing for a happy end, which depends, in addition to knowledge and skill, upon the will of God.³⁸ The association of investment in mining with gambling and uncertainty clearly connects the desire for material gain with a fear of financial shipwreck and loss and situates them within a discourse of Christian virtue. Matthäus Gundelach's (1566–1653) allegory of mining and the earth offers a highly elaborated representation of this interconnection [Fig. 6.5]. It depicts an appealing and naked Fortuna wearing nothing but a sheer veil around her hips. In her hands she holds a tiny windblown sail, and she balances on a wheel that does not, however, seem to represent the wheel of fortune. It looks more like a hasp wheel that carries underground mud, dirt, and ores to the surface. Fortuna even acts as the wheel's main driving force, seeming to push it forward against the wind. In the foreground on the right a positively connoted miner is shown in his traditional garb, the miner's hood. He holds a beautiful piece of ore (*Erzstufe*) and a miner's axe (*Bergbarte*) in his hand. More pieces of ore are arranged in the left foreground, just next to the hasp wheel, and below the miner's hand. They act as symbols of the richness of nature's materials as disclosed by divine providence. In the background on the left a group of negatively connoted treasure hunters are portrayed acting behind Fortuna's back. With various tools they violently dig up the earth in search of riches. The viewer gets a glimpse of the hoard of coins these treasure hunters long for, but also sees the shimmering eyes of a hardly recognizable beast. The treasure hunters seem to be following instructions given by a man reading from a book. In his allegory, Gundelach opposes artificial riches

38 Stähli U., "Hoffnung als ökonomischer Affekt", in Klein I. – Windmüller S. (eds.), *Kultur und Ökonomie* (Bielefeld: 2014) 283–299, at 288.



FIGURE 6.5 *Matthäus Gundelach, Allegory of Mining (ca. 1620). Oil on canvas, 133 × 86 cm. Dortmund, Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte (inv. no. C 5188).*

IMAGE © MUSEUM FÜR KUNST UND KULTURGESCHICHTE, DORTMUND.

(coins) to natural riches and pits the learned and honest miner whom we already know from the treatises of Rühle von Calw, Agricola and Biringuccio against ignorant, greedy, and reckless treasure hunters; however, he arranges both along the axis of chance.³⁹

While Gundelach's painting addresses man's handling of natural resources as a moral allegory of virtues and vices, other examples explicitly articulate the connection to current monetary problems. Between 1622 and 1624, Friedrich Ulrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1591–1634) commissioned several silver *Fortuna* thalers in his mints [Fig. 6.6]. The duchy of Braunschweig und Lüneburg was one of the major centres of the hyperinflation caused by the increased production of minor coins (*Scheidemünzen*) in the many newly founded local mints. The practice of changing good money into coins with very low or no silver content was a profitable business. Friedrich Ulrich managed to finance his wars with the profits from the production of minor coins. The majority of the territorial rulers in the German territories did likewise, and the value of the thaler coin increased beyond measure. The population as well as the state finances suffered immensely from these practices. The huge damage caused by this coin policy had become evident by 1622. Friedrich Ulrich was among the first



FIGURE 6.6 *Fortuna* coin of Friedrich Ulrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1622–1624). 1/4 thaler, 34.68 g silver. Deutsche Bank Hannover, Niedersächsisches Münzkabinett (inv. no. 01.124.06).

IMAGE © NIEDERSÄCHSISCHES MÜNZKABINETT DER DEUTSCHEN BANK, HANNOVER.

39 Holländer H., "Kommentare und Notizen zur Bildgeschichte des Bergbaus", in Holländer H. (ed.), *Erkenntnis, Erfindung, Konstruktion* (Berlin: 2000) 643–672.

German territorial rulers to implement a change by suppressing the production of minor coins, and the Fortuna thalers represent a significant response.⁴⁰

The obverse contains images of the four elements air, water, earth, and fire. Each element is linked to a specific occupation: air is represented by falconry, water by fishing, earth by mining, and fire by smelting and assaying. The four scenes are separated by an inscription arranged to form a cross proclaiming: 'DIE MENSCHEN IN DER WELDT / TRACHTN ALSO NACH GELT' ('All men of the world strive after money'). Fortuna is represented on the reverse with the inscription: 'O. IHR. LEVTE. ALLE. VIER. WAS. IHR. SVCHT. DAS. FINT. IHR. HIER.' ('Oh people, all four of you, you will find here what you're looking for'). The material quality of the coin emphasizes on the one hand that men's desire for money is satisfied by possessing a silver coin, while on the symbolic level the thaler critically reflects upon contemporary monetary policy by pointing to the damages caused by the Kipper and Wipper troubles, and criticizes the human greed for profit. On the other hand, it is the cross itself that matters: Sophistically, the coin problematizes the human quest for vain treasure such as silver coins by placing the cross, as the most important symbol of Christian redemption, at the centre of all worldly activities. The Fortuna thaler represents an at-once material and symbolic means of articulation within a discourse of value, with the symbolic level explicitly challenging current norms and systems of valuation.

The Christian associations of the mining investor's hopes become evident in the treatise *The sacred mine*, which was written by Peter Eichholz, pastor of the mining town of Zellerfeld in the Harz Mountains. For Eichholz, a Christian miner must possess three virtues, namely hope, the willingness to give, and insistence or perseverance:

A mining investor must possess a strong hope of abundant yields, but as we shall see, this good and powerful hope is often betrayed: for as all hope of temporal things is deceitful, as it is written in the Holy Scripture, Psalms 146:3 and Tim 6:13, how can hope be honest and certain in the context of mining. For a Christian, the only certain hope is that of eternal goods [...].⁴¹

40 Leschhorn W., *Braunschweigische Münzen- und Medaillen* (Braunschweig: 2010) 171–193; Jesse W., *Münz- und Geldgeschichte Niedersachsens* (Braunschweig: 1952) 74–79.

41 'Ein bawender Gewercke bey dem Bergwerck muß eine starcke Hoffnung auf reiche Außbeute haben / wiewol es geschiehet / daß man bey seiner guten starcken Hoffnung oft betrogen wird / wie angeführt: gestalt da alle Hoffnung aufs Zeitliche dero gestalt betrieglich ist / wie neben der Erfahrung die H. Schrift so klar bezeuget Psal. 146/3.

Eichholz's treatise clearly connects temporal with eternal goods. The popular German mining proverb 'He who in mining would invest will find that faith in God and fortune's best' links the levels of eternal stability and temporal volatility and instability.⁴²

Monetary practices thus involve both economic and symbolic dimensions as two modes of articulation within a discourse on the measurement and negotiation of value. Within the discourse of material wealth and the desire for treasure, Fortuna and the *Kux*, as materializations of the latter, serve as opening factors: They open up economic practices towards symbolic and affective dimensions while at the same time exposing them to moral judgement and cultural criticism.

Conclusion

This chapter on the paper objects known as *Kuxe* and on the practices and discourses of mining investment sheds light on a more complex story than the simple history of a financial instrument. The *Kux* appears not as a passive medium that refers to external goods and values, but rather as a site of mediation where the polyvalence and multivocality of material meanings and values, financial practices, and moral implications are materialized. The *Kux* may thus be considered a tangible medium that lends concrete form to transformations and projections of the value of precious metals. Written from the perspective of the *Kux*, the early history of financial investment in mining is thus a dramatic story in which micro-economic calculations, risk-management, and desires merge. Rather than imposing a contemporary perspective on commercial developments onto early modern times, the financial practices and discourses of the *Kuxe* trade should be analyzed as sociocultural phenomena in their own right—phenomena constituted by the entanglement of the

1. Tim 6/17. Wie kan den bey dem Bergwerck die Hoffnung unbetrüglich und gewisser seyn. Eine gewissere Hoffnung hat ein Christen Mensche was das ewige Gut belanget: Denn dieselbige siehet nicht auff ein so flüchtig und vergänglich Gut / wie die Hoffnung so auf zeitliche Dinge gerichtet [...]; see Eichholtz Peter, *Ein geistliches Bergwerck* (Zellerfeld, Nikolaus Dunker: 1655) 533.

42 'Wer Bergkwerck wil bawen / Muss Gott und dem Glück vertrauen', see Löhneysen Georg Engelhard, *Bericht / Vom Bergkwerck / Wie man dieselben Bawen / und in gutem Wolstandt bingen soll / sampt allen darzu gehörigen Arbeiten / Ordnung und rechtlichen Process* (Zellerfeld, Georg Engelhard Löhneysen: 1617) 3; Eichholtz, *Ein geistliches Bergwerck* 529.

actors' economic practices and techniques with meaning-making affects such as hope, desire, uncertainty, and fortune.

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Mediating between Art and Nature: The Countess of Arundel at Tart Hall

Jennifer Rabe

Known as an avid collector and patron of painters in Britain and Italy, Aletheia Howard, Countess of Arundel (1585–1654), was also an expert in domestic medicine, acquiring objects, books, and recipes to expand her knowledge of nature and art. In 1633, the Countess acquired Tart Hall, an old villa she had been renting for some time. Demolished after 1720, the house was situated between the parishes of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and St. Margaret and conveniently located within walking distance of Whitehall Palace as well as Arundel House in the Strand. It was, however, remote enough to be called a ‘casino’, a rural pleasure house, by George Con, a frequent visitor and papal agent to the English court.¹ After the purchase, a new, larger main house was added and the whole estate remodelled.² Completed in 1638, the new structure indicates Tart Hall’s function as a ‘house of delight’, a pleasure-house for the entertainment of guests and the enjoyment of nature. Surrounded by large gardens, the main house was U-shaped with two parallel galleries framing a courtyard, and numerous windows looking out onto the fields and trees [Fig. 7.1].³

One of the most sumptuous spaces on the estate was a separate chamber called the Dutch Pranketing Room or the Pranketing House.⁴ The room has been understood mainly as a collector’s cabinet, a space for the passive contemplation of rare objects and paintings. In this chapter I want to interpret Tart Hall, and more specifically the Pranketing Room, in the context of the

1 Hervey M., *The Life, Correspondence and Collections of Thomas Howard Earl of Arundel* (London: 1921) 400.

2 For a study of the Countess of Arundel’s acquisition of and architectural additions to Tart Hall, see Chew E.V., *Female Art Patronage and Collecting in Seventeenth-Century Britain*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: 2000) 176–211.

3 Shown in a copy of a seventeenth-century map, see Baynes R., *A Platt and Description of Tart Hall House With the Gardens, a Nineteenth-Century Copy of a Seventeenth-Century Plan c. 1800*, British Library, Maps Crace Port. 11.61.

4 Both terms appear in the inventory. Dianne Duggan has argued that it was probably a separate building, see Duggan D., “‘A Rather Fascinating Hybrid’: Tart Hall, Lady Arundel’s ‘Casino at Whitehall’”, *The British Art Journal* 4 (2003) 54–64.

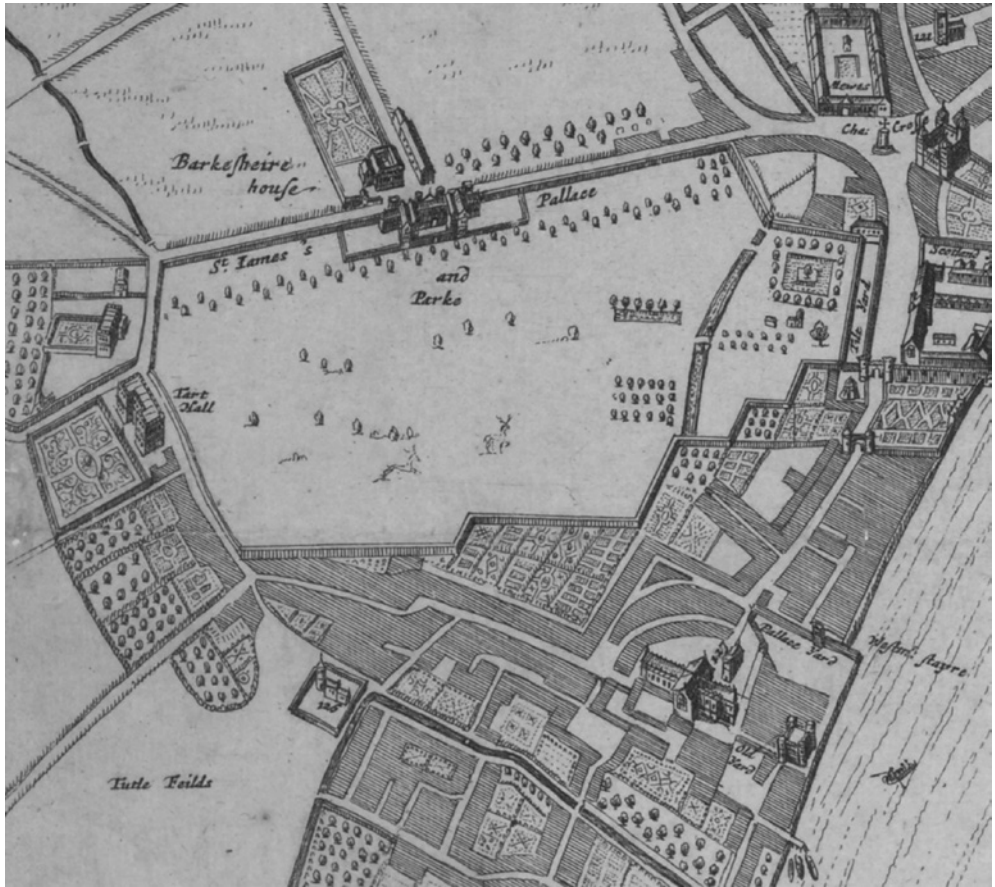


FIGURE 7.1 Richard Baynes, *A Platt and Description of Tart Hall House with the Gardens*, a Nineteenth-Century Copy of a Seventeenth-Century Plan (ca. 1800). London, *The British Library*.

IMAGE © THE BRITISH LIBRARY, MAPS CRACE PORT. 11.61.

Countess's interests in natural philosophy, medicine, and domestic experiments. Taking into account her *Selected Experiments*, the collection of various recipes she compiled during her lifetime, and the large number of porcelain dishes and many other precious household items, I will argue that the room provided an ideal space for the complex and elaborate tasks of the early modern gentlewoman: the preparation of preserves, confections, sweet-meats, and medicines [Fig. 7.2].

The Countess's practice is documented by the collection of recipes published in 1655 as well as two autograph recipe collections, and is consistent with the interests of the elite women around her and the scholars of the so-called



FIGURE 7.2 Title page to *Aletheia, Countess of Arundel, Natura Exenterata or Nature Unbowed* [...] her Choicest Secrets Digested into Receipts (London, Twiford – Bedell – Ekins: 1655).

IMAGE © PUBLIC DOMAIN.

‘Arundel Circle’. Although there is no conclusive evidence of the immediate physical involvement of Lady Arundel in the preparation of the recipes listed in her book, even if she did not get her own hands dirty, she was responsible for instructing and supervising her staff. Collaboration and networks were crucial to early modern experiments in medicine. Studies have traced these networks mainly in written documents, examining the reading practices of early modern gentlewomen.⁵

The elite status of gentlewomen engaging in domestic experiments implies the necessity of physical sites for female knowledge practices and networks

5 Leong E. – Pennell S., “Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern ‘Medical Marketplace’”, in Renner M.S.R – Wallis P. (eds.), *Medicine and the Market in England and its Colonies, c. 1450–1850* (London: 2007) 133–152.

outside of the kitchen. By connecting the objects and paintings to the accomplishments of the Countess, the Pranketing Room emerges as such a site. Mediating between the labours of art and the virtues of nature, the objects in the room refer to an early modern concept of art that encompassed the practice of craftsmen and painters as well as the skills of physicians, cooks, and gentlewomen. The fact that Tart Hall was understood by contemporaries as a 'casino' meant that the building, like the Queen's house constructed at the same time, was defined by the dialectic of nature and artifice common to this type of suburban villa.⁶ In early modern Europe an interest in the arts, and in material, corporeal, and spiritual treatments, united scholars, artists, physicians, and the nobility, not least the early modern gentlewoman.⁷ The lavishly decorated rooms at Tart Hall were laden with notions of material and artistic illusion and transformation, topics that preoccupied the Countess and her peers.⁸ The Pranketing Room provided an ideal space for the making as well as the consumption of confections and medicines. Reflecting on the relationship between matter and change, between nature and experiment, the objects and paintings at Tart Hall can be read as a confident statement by the Countess to assert her status as a learned gentlewoman, virtuosa, and natural philosopher.⁹

6 Chew, *Female Art Patronage* 193.

7 Hanson C., *The English Virtuoso: Art, Medicine, and Antiquarianism in the Age of Empiricism* (Chicago, IL: 2009) and Frank R.G., "The Physician as Virtuoso in Seventeenth-Century England", in Shapiro B. – Frank R.G., *English Scientific Virtuosi in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Los Angeles, CA: 1976) 59–114. For the early modern concept of *ars*, see Burns W.E., "A Proverb of Versatile Mutability: Proteus and Natural Knowledge in Early Modern Britain", *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 4 (2001) 969–980, and Moran B.T., "Art and Artisanship in Early Modern Alchemy", *Getty Research Journal* 5 (2013) 1–14.

8 For the Countess as collector, see Peck L.L., *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York, NY: 2005) 136–142, and Howarth D., "The Patronage and Collecting of Aletheia, Countess of Arundel, 1606–54", *Journal of the History of Collections* 10 (1998) 125–137. For the religious and political implications of artistic illusions, see Lister S.M., "'Trumperies brought from Rome': Barberini Gifts to the Stuart Court in 1635", in Cropper E. (ed.), *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy* (Bologna: 1998) 151–175.

9 The first to point out this connection is J. Claxton in *'Tralucet as Amber, and Subtler then Christall': The Cultural Context of Porcelain in Early Modern England 1588–1700*, Ph.D. dissertation (Queen Mary University London: 2012) 233–234: 'Given both Lady Arundel's specific pharmacological associations and the items of kitchenware recorded [...] it seems plausible that she too produced her medicinal remedies in her own private room.' See also Spiller E., "Introductory Note", in Spiller E. (ed.), *Seventeenth-Century English Recipe Books: Cooking, Physic and Chirurgery in the Works of Elizabeth Talbot Grey and Aletheia Talbot Howard* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2008) ix–li.

Books and Recipes

The Countess began collecting medical and culinary recipes at least as early as 1606, the year of her marriage to Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel (1585–1646).¹⁰ Lady Arundel's collection of recipes was published posthumously under the title *Natura Exenterata: Or Nature Unbowelled* in 1655.¹¹ Many women of the nobility collected domestic and medicinal knowledge, and recipes served as a means to accumulate, preserve, and exchange experiences.¹² The recipes were handed down from generation to generation, changed and enlarged through personal experience and networks of experts as well as through printed herbals and recipe collections.¹³ Together with *A Choice Manual, or Rare Secrets in Physick and Chirurgery* (1653) by Lady Arundel's sister Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, and Queen Henrietta Maria's *The Queen's Closet Opened* (1655), *Natura Exenterata* belongs to the first printed recipe books officially authored by a woman. Of special interest as a singular document of medical practice combining traditional Galenic medicine with newer Paracelsian remedies, the collection, like the two other books, ostensibly draws on the status and knowledge traditions of its noble author.¹⁴

Although the work was published under the name 'Philiatros', Aletheia's authorship has been widely acknowledged ever since her contemporary Samuel Hartlib mentioned her name when he traded the book with Robert Boyle.¹⁵ The subtitle of the book advertises 'Selected Experiments in Physick

10 *Liber Comitissae Arundeliae: A Booke of divers medecines [...] of which many or the most part have been experienced and tryed by the speciall practize of Mrs Corlyon*. Wellcome Western MS. 213. It has been speculated that Mrs. Corlyon may have been connected to the Arundel family, but it is also possible that Corlyon was an early pseudonym of the Countess's (a reference to the lion in the Talbot coat of arms).

11 Aletheia, Countess of Arundel, *Natura Exenterata or Nature Unbowelled [...] her Choicest Secrets Digested into Receipts* (London, Twiford – Bedell – Ekins: 1655).

12 Hunter L. – Hutton S. (eds.), *Women, Science and Medicine 1500–1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society* (Gloucestershire: 1997). See also Pollock L.A., *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay 1552–1620* (London: 1993).

13 For the importance of printed books, see Leong E., "Herbals she peruseth': Reading Medicine in Early Modern England", *Renaissance Studies* 28 (2014) 556–578.

14 Hunter L., "Women and Domestic Medicine: Lady Experimenters, 1570–1620", in Hunter – Hutton, *Women, Science and Medicine* 89–107, at 89. For the political importance of the recipe book for the Restauration in England, see Knoppers L.L., "Opening the Queen's Closet: Henrietta Maria, Elizabeth Cromwell and the Politics of Cookery", *Renaissance Quarterly* 60 (2007) 464–499.

15 Philiatros translates to 'friend of medicine', an ancient term denoting an amateur with an interest and skills in this field; see Luchner K., *Philiatroi: Studien zum Thema der Krankheit*

and Chirurgery' and 'her choicest secrets digested into receipts', that is, the depth and breadth of the Countess's collected experience. The title stresses the importance of the Countess's personal practice and experience, a characteristic shared with the collections attributed to Queen Henrietta Maria and Lady Kent. The title page of Lady Kent's collection promises recipes which were 'Collected and Practised by the [...] Countesse of Kent', while Henrietta Maria's recipes were 'honoured with her own practice, when she pleased to descend to these more private Recreations'.

Several recipes were copied from the collection of her mother-in-law, Anne Howard (née Dacre), a collector of medicinal knowledge famous for her medical skills.¹⁶ The traditional herbal remedies are mainly taken from this collection, as are the techniques for distillation. The 1655 printed edition, however, adds instructions for 'Chymical Extractions' such as *aurum potabile* and various kinds of *quintessence* to its long list of recipes for waters, syrups, preserves, and ointments. Describing the distillation of rare spagyric substances such as quicksilver and antimony, the Countess's later additions also included an introduction to physicians' symbols for different measures, a table of 'Chymicall Characters' and a list of 'Secrets of Hearbs not commonly to be found in any common herbal'. The table of signs for substances such as lead, copper, and quicksilver as well as for purification, salt, saltpetre, antimony, aqua fortis, aqua regis, and the four elements, emphasizes the Countess's adept knowledge. The three-page long list includes newly discovered properties of herbs such as agnus castus (or chaste tree), caraway, and wormwood (or absinthium).

The book showcases the advanced status of the Countess's household practices. While still providing recipes for tarts and soups, and making use of well-known herbs and traditional compositions, the Countess introduced novel substances and concepts based on expert knowledge. Her practice mediated between the Galenic philosophy of humoral balance and Paracelsian iatrochemistry, the chemical therapy of ailments.¹⁷ Lady Arundel's knowledge

in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit (Göttingen: 2004) 14–20. It is curiously the same pseudonym that Conrad Gessner used for his *De Remediis Secretis*. For the note, see Hartlib Samuel, "Memo on the Countess of Arundel's *Natura Exenterata*, undated", in Greengrass M. – Leslie M. – Hannon M., *The Hartlib Papers*, 2013, Ref. 26/72A-B Blank, available from <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib> (accessed: 02.08.2016): '*Natura Exenterata* written by the countesse of Arundel [...] To send to Mr. Boyl's for Basilius Valentinus in 4to'. See also Spiller, "Introductory Note" xxxv.

16 Archer J., "The Queen's Arcanum: Authority and Authorship in the 'Queen's Closet Opened'", *Renaissance Journal* 1 (2002) 1–12, at 1.

17 For an account of the debate between Galenic humoral and Paracelsian alchemical treatment, see Debus A.G., "The Paracelsian Compromise in Elizabethan England", *Ambix* 8

of nature and medicine was still based in large part on traditional, proven recipes, decidedly altered and extended, however, by her own experience, and also benefited from her constant reading.

For her practice, the Countess could draw on a variety of written sources, both traditional and more recent. She had access to Albertus Magnus's *Liber Mineralium* (*The Book of Minerals*), a book that compares the alchemist's work to that of a physician who heals through flushing out corrupt matter, Roger Bacon's *Speculum Alchemiae* (*The Mirror of Alchemy*), and Geber's *Alchemia*. Raymond Lull's *De Secretis Naturae* (*On the Secrets of Nature*) stood next to the *Tabula Smaragdina* (*The Emerald Tablet*) ascribed to the mythical Hermes Trismegistos. These books belong to the standard reference books for early modern alchemists, so that the library contained a small but comprehensive group of medicinal and alchemical works. Lady Arundel owned one of the earliest popular books on this topic, Hieronymus Brunschwig's *Distillandi Ars* (*The Art of Distillation*). The book provides illustrated instructions on how to use the laboratory equipment necessary for the distillation of spirits.¹⁸ Her library also included Albengnefith's *De Virtutibus Ciborum et Medicinarum* (*On the Virtues of Food and Medicines*), Al-Kindi's *De Gradibus* (*On Dosage*), Fioravanti's *Fisica*, Ambroise Paré's writings on the plague, poisons, and remedies (including the value and virtue of powdered mummy and unicorn horn), John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (*The Hieroglyphic Monad*) and several books by Paracelsus.¹⁹

In 1618 the Countess of Arundel autographed her copy of Fabio Colonna's *Minus Cogitarum Stirpium* (*Of little-known Plants*). The botanical compendium by the Neapolitan philosopher and member of the Academia dei Lincei had been published in Rome just two years before. Primarily an account of rare plants, several of them from across the Atlantic, the book provides early

(1960) 71–97, and Webster C., “Alchemical and Paracelsian Medicine”, in Levack P. (ed.), *Renaissance Magic* (New York, NY – London: 1992) 183–216.

18 Wall W., “Distillation: Transformations in and out of the Kitchen”, in Fitzpatrick J. (ed.), *Renaissance Food from Rabelais to Shakespeare: Culinary Readings and Culinary Histories* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2010) 89–106, at 91.

19 The books are listed in the catalogue of books donated to the Royal Society, William Perry, *Bibliotheca Norfolciana, sive, Catalogus libb. manuscriptorum et impressorum in omni arte et lingua quos [...] Henricus Dux Norfolciae, etc. Regiae Societati Londinensi pro scientia naturali promovenda donavit* (London, R. Chiswell: 1681). For the use of mummies in early modern England, see Dannenfeldt K., “Egyptian Mumia: The Sixteenth Century Experience and Debate”, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (1985) 163–180, and Gordon-Grube K., “Evidence of Medicinal Cannibalism in Puritan New England: ‘Mummy’ and Related Remedies in Edward Taylor’s ‘Dispensatory’”, *Early American Literature* 28 (1993) 185–221.

evidence of the reception of the work of the famous Roman academy by an English noblewoman, and was probably bought during Lady Arundel's travels through Italy in that time.²⁰ As part of the large Arundel library, which was later to form the nucleus of the library of the Royal Society, the book was one of the most recent works on natural philosophy at the Countess's disposal.

The influence of both tradition and reading on Lady Arundel's interests in natural philosophy also shaped the practice of many early modern gentlewomen.²¹ While the recipes were shared and often attributed to experts, family members, physicians, and friends, it was the gentlewoman's own practice that served as proof of their effectiveness.²² The fabrication, scrutiny, and refinement of recipes by members of the high-ranking female elites required a specific space that met the needs of an experimental kitchen and highlighted the importance of the gentlewomen's expertise and exchange.²³ Unlike other female practitioners, now often nameless and forgotten because of their low status and literacy, the Countess documented her experiences in the field, noting her sources and collaborators. Assuming that the long list of outstanding physicians and gentlewomen, among them Kenelm Digby and a long list of doctors, as well as the Countesses of Surrey and Sussex and Lady Killigrew, not only exchanged recipes, but also met in physical spaces, it is difficult to prove which venues they actually used. Such a space had to be practical, and at best provide a way for the gentlewoman to adequately supervise and direct the work of helpers and staff. However, such a room also had to be sumptuous, reflecting the Countess's status and erudition to visitors and collaborators.

Tart Hall

Tart Hall has been mainly understood as a space for Lady Arundel to express herself more freely as a Catholic court lady and collector. At Tart Hall the Countess entertained high-ranking courtiers, court ladies, and visitors to the

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- 20 Peck L.L., "Uncovering the Arundel Library at the Royal Society: Changing Meanings of Science and the Fate of the Norfolk Donation", *Notes and Record of the Royal Society of London* 52 (1998) 3–24, at 5.
 - 21 Leong E., "Reading Medicine in Early Modern England"; see also Harkness D., *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven, CT – London: 2007).
 - 22 For the importance of household practice for recipe collections, see Leong – Pennell, "Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge".
 - 23 For an evaluation of the early modern kitchen as a site of experimentation, see Pennell S., "'Pots and Pans History': The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England", *Journal of Design History* 11 (1998) 201–216.

English court. Since the building was designed to cater to her needs exclusively, one can assume that the domestic and philosophical knowledge demonstrated in *Natura Exenterata* had an impact on the design of the building, with the Pranketing Room as the most probable space for the practice of Lady Arundel's skills. The exchange between the female gentry and networks of experts, which can be traced in recipe collections through the names mentioned as sources for certain recipes and the affixed lists of sources implies the necessity of a physical place to meet, experiment and exchange experience. Tart Hall would have been an ideal spot for collective work.

A number of studies have shed light on the now lost building and its history. Elizabeth Chew has shown that Lady Arundel used Tart Hall, in contrast to Arundel House in the Strand, to express her identity as a collector and patron in her own right and to showcase her confessional identity as a Roman Catholic at the Stuart court as well as her connoisseurship.²⁴ Given the Countess's Catholic faith and the anti-Catholic agenda in England at the time the inventory was made in 1641, a year before the outbreak of civil war, one of the rooms explicitly excluded from the inventory might indeed have been used as a private chapel.

Dianne Duggan has analysed the architecture and history of Tart Hall, locating the building's influences in Venice and Antwerp, and identifying the Countess herself as the probable designer.²⁵ Juliet Claxton's analysis of the separate inventory of the Dutch Pranketing Room has stressed the importance of the Countess as a collector of porcelain and other precious and rare objects, while a chapter in her thesis examines the impressive collection of porcelain in particular.²⁶ Highlighting the building as the Countess's private pleasure-house and the Pranketing Room as her collector's cabinet, the studies have shown that at Tart Hall she was free to display the wealth of her collection and her Catholic faith. Building on these findings, I want to explore an aspect of the building that has been neglected thus far by connecting the estate to Lady Arundel's experiments.

The collection of paintings on display shows some peculiarities that hint at the specific purpose of Tart Hall. Several painted scenes allude to Lady Arundel's stay in Italy, such as the depiction of a gondola and another of a *bravo*, the portrait of a former ambassador to Rome, and an Italian maze. A second large group of paintings comes from the Netherlands. In most cases

24 Chew E., "The Countess of Arundel and Tart Hall", in Chaney E. (ed.), *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (New Haven, CT – London: 2003) 285–314.

25 Duggan, "'A Rather Fascinating Hybrid'" 56.

26 Claxton, *'Tralucet as Amber, and subtler then Christall'* 227–240.

they are explicitly designated as Dutch in the inventory, as is the Pranketing Room itself: a long picture of a banquet 'of Fruterie and People thereat', a Dutch merchant, and a 'Dutch woeman Cooke'.²⁷ The paintings of a courtesan receiving a letter, a woman selling fruit, and a garland are probably also from the Netherlands. The paintings convey Lady Arundel's fondness for the Netherlands, while the choice of subject reveals further aspects of Dutch culture Lady Arundel was interested in, namely Dutch cuisine and flower arrangements, an interest manifest in the presence of more than forty 'flower potts' and 'flower glasses' in the Pranketing Room.

The high esteem for Dutch household products and culture probably stems from the attribution of great virtue and special skills to Dutch women, and might explain why the Arundels' antiquarian Franciscus Junius not only dedicated the English edition of *De Pictura Veterum* (*The Painting of the Ancients*) to the Countess, but was also employed to provide for 'honestly good butter from Holland'.²⁸ The Countess's network and her extended travels on the continent and especially to Antwerp, Padua, and Venice provided occasions for the accumulation of exceptional culinary and medicinal experience. After the Countess's appearance before the Council of Ten in Venice during the Foscari affair, she received confections and wax worth one hundred Venetian ducats as recompense.²⁹

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- 27 The Pranketing Room is called Dutch once in the Tart Hall inventory. Its own separate inventory mentions a variety of 'Dutch baskets'. For the relevant entry, see Cust L., "Notes on the Collections Formed by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, K.G. – III", *Burlington Magazine* 20 (1912) 233–236, at 235. The other parts of the inventory are published in Cust L., "Notes on the Collections Formed by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, K.G. – II", *Burlington Magazine* 20 (1911) 97–100; and Cust L., "Notes on the Collections Formed by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, K.G. – IV", *Burlington Magazine* 20 (1912) 341–343.
- 28 Junius's letter to Elizabeth Junius, 10 March 1629, in Romburgh S. van, *For my worthy Freind Mr Franciscus Junius: An Edition of the Correspondence of Francis Junius F.F. (1591–1677)* (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2004) 351. On the importance of Dutch products, see Korda N., "Froes, Rebatoes and Other 'Outlandish Comodities': Weaving Alien Women's Work into the Fabric of Early Modern Material Culture", in Hamling T. – Richardson C. (eds.), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2010) 95–106.
- 29 "Venice: April 1622, 21–30", in Hinds A.B. (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, 38 vols. (London: 1864–1947) vol. 17, 292–331, April 28: 'In proof of our good-will we have decided to present the lady with various confections and other refreshments [...] one hundred ducats in confections and wax to be sent in the name of the State to the Countess of Arundel'. Foscari, former Venetian ambassador to England, had been accused of betrayal, some of his conspiratorial meetings with

Examined within the context of Lady Arundel's collection of recipes, the estate may be seen as a site of transformation and natural philosophy. Mythological ceiling paintings and chimneypieces in the rooms connecting two long galleries on the third floor at the east end of the building alluded to cosmology and transformation. The room used for playing chess was decorated with a ceiling painting of *Aurora* and the *Holy Family* as a chimneypiece. The other room features a ceiling painting of *The Fall of Phaeton* and *Diana and Actaeon* over the chimney, as well as a painting of *Niobe*.

The two long galleries created environments in correspondence to the gardens surrounding the building.³⁰ The North Gallery showcased no paintings, but four drawings of religious topics by the Venetian masters Tintoretto and Bassano 'in slight frames'.³¹ Rather than being concerned with the display of selected antique marble sculptures and ancient inscriptions of the famous collection, as was the case at Arundel House, the galleries established a dialogue with the garden to the north and St. James's Park on the south side of the building.³² Large windows, through which views of the surrounding nature could be enjoyed from the highest floor, were complemented by Persian carpets with intricate geometrical ornaments in the North Gallery, and a large number of landscape paintings in the South Gallery.³³

Located on the edge of St. James's park, the grounds belonging to Tart Hall were expansive, and included four different gardens.³⁴ The Countess's practice mediated between the fruit gardens and their use as remedies, skilfully refining herbs and fruit. Her recipes combined the fruits of nature and increased their

papal agents supposedly having taken place in Lady Arundel's palazzo. For the role of the Countess in the affair, see Parolin P., 'The Venetian Theater of Aletheia Talbot, Countess of Arundel', in Brown P. – Parolin P. (eds.), *Women Players in England 1550–1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2005) 219–240.

30 The room with the painting of the *Holy Family* and the ceiling fresco depicting *Aurora* was used for playing chess. A third room only displayed paintings of angels and small-scale bronze replicas of famous antique sculptures. For a detailed description of the rooms, see Chew, *Female Art Patronage* 216–234.

31 Cust, 'Notes on the Collections – III' 233.

32 For a description of Arundel House, see Howarth D., *Lord Arundel and his Circle* (New Haven, CT – London: 1985) 120–122.

33 Chew, *Female Art Patronage* 226–230.

34 Baynes, *A Platt and Description of Tart Hall House*. Apart from the names, no other description of the gardens has survived. The four gardens were 'The Countess of Arundells Tart Hall Court Yarde and Garden in the Parish of St. Margretts West', 'The Countess of Arundells Lees Garden', 'The Countess of Arundell's Pymlyes Garden', and 'The Countess of Arundells Tart Hall Garden in the Parish of St Martin.'

effects by turning them into confections, waters, ointments, and potions aimed at healing the body. In contrast to the methods of study cultivated by her husband and his circle at Arundel House, the Countess's interests in cultivating plants and studying their virtues aligned with the rise of Baconian 'learned experience', which valued novel forms of practical research and diverse forms of knowledge.³⁵

The garden was a place to both gather and apply knowledge of nature and its cultivation with the subject of philosophical discourse. John Evelyn, a close family friend and regular guest at Arundel House, promoted the garden as a site of knowledge in his unpublished *Elysium Britannicum*: "To be able to discourse of the Elements and to penetrate into the energie and reasons of things [...] What is our gardiner to be but an absolute Philosopher!"³⁶ In *Elysium* Evelyn suggests that a profound knowledge of the elements and the constellations is fundamental for the cultivation of the garden, adding that 'nature is nothing but the invisible fruite of the Elements & astrall virtue, the products of the invisible Vertues conceald under sensible bodys, as the human soule in our bodys.'³⁷ Evelyn was not directly employed by the Countess; in 1667, he was, however, commissioned to design a garden for the Countess's son, Henry Howard.³⁸ Connecting microcosm and macrocosm, the elements of the earth with the virtues of the stars, the geometrically ordered gardens with their various fruits and herbs around Tart Hall not only provided the material for the Countess's recipes, but also conveyed her mastery of the arts of cookery and medicine.

The Pranketing Room

The key site for the Countess's interest in the transformation of nature through art can be found in the Pranketing Room. The name and location of the Pranketing Room have been used as clues to identify it as a banqueting hall.

35 Zittel C., "Introduction", in Zittel C. – Nanni R. – Engel G. – Karafyllis N.C. (eds.), *Philosophies of Technology: Francis Bacon and His Contemporaries*, Intersections 11, 2 vols. (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2008) vol. 1, xix–xxix, at xxiii.

36 Evelyn John, *Elysium Britannicum: Or the Royal Gardens in Three Books*, ed. J. Ingram (Philadelphia, PA: 1992) 4.

37 Evelyn, *Elysium* 36C.

38 Charlesworth M., "A Plan by John Evelyn for Henry Howard's Garden at Albury Park, Surrey", in O'Malley T. – Wolschke-Buhlmann J. (eds.), *John Evelyn's Elysium Britannicum and European Gardening* (Washington, DC: 1998) 289–293.

This architectural invention of a specific room or building dedicated to one specific part of the meal, the banquet course, was genuinely English. The banquet course featured confections and intricate small-scale sculptures made from marchpane and sugar paste, often imitating the food served as a main course, and had become an important part of dining during the Jacobean period.³⁹ The oblong, two-storey structure at the north end of the building next to the great dining hall had a second-floor gallery decorated all around with paintings. Termed 'Dutch' in the inventory, either the structure, purpose, or decoration of the room must have been associated with the Netherlands, a country with which the Countess had frequent contact, and which she chose as her residence after leaving London in 1641.

The exact meaning of the neologism 'pranketing' has been linked to the English verb 'to prank' for 'to decorate [...] in a gay, bright, or showy manner', and to the Dutch word 'proncken' for 'to show off or display', and therefore has to be read as a combination of the words 'banqueting' and 'pranking'.⁴⁰ An additional meaning of the word 'prank' already in use in the early modern period was 'a trick, a knack, a device, a slight, a conceit' and 'a foolish trick, [...] or a ludicrous trick'.⁴¹ Deceit and the artful imitation of nature were crucial to the banquet with its intricate sugar sculptures imitating food, animals, and flowers, but also architecture and figures.⁴² Imitation also lay at the heart of the sweet conceits and confections of various forms and flavours served at the banquet. The creation of non-perishable confections scented and shaped

39 Wilson C.A., "The Evolution of the Banquet Course", in Wilson C.A. (ed.), *Banqueting Stuffe: The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet* (Edinburgh: 1991) 9–35; see also Strong R., *Feast: A History of Grand Eating* (London: 2002) 197–200.

40 Duggan, "A Rather Fascinating Hybrid" 64, note 86, and Howarth D., "The Patronage and Collecting of Aletheia, Countess of Arundel, 1606–1654", *Journal of the History of Collections* 10 (1998) 125–137, at 134–135, and Claxton, "The Countess of Arundel's Dutch Pranketing Room" 187.

41 Johnson S., *Johnson's Dictionary: A Modern Selection* (New York, NY: 1963) 305–306. See also Raleigh Walter, *The History of the World* (London, Walter Burre: 1614) 430: 'Whereupon they caused the table to be covered and meat set on; which was no sooner set down than that presently in came the harpies, and played their accustomed pranks'; and Florio John, *A World of Words, or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (London, Arnold Hatfield: 1598) 422: definition of the Italian term 'tiro' as—between others—'a prank'; and in Cotgrave Randle, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, Adam Islip: 1632) 'prank' is used as a definition of 'Saillie de S. Mathurin'.

42 Brears P., "Rare Conceites and Strange Delights: The Practical Aspects of Culinary Sculpture", in Wilson, *Banqueting Stuffe* 60–114.

like fruit or flowers resisted decay as well as binary oppositions between nature and art.

The deception of the senses and the translation of objects into a different medium were traditionally associated with the field of painting. While Tart Hall was generously decorated with paintings, only a small and curious selection of paintings was displayed in the Pranketing Room, emphasizing instead the lavish decoration with brass utensils, porcelain dishes, and small-scale blanc-de-chine sculptures. The first paintings mentioned in the inventory of the room are of 'a Hen depicted drest in a Dish and above that the Picture of a live Hen.'⁴³ The choice to pair the painting of a live animal with one depicting its cooked and seasoned counterpart refers to the important act of turning a living being into a digestible dish, while an—in certain ways similar—act of transformation takes place within the depiction itself. The subject takes up one of the most popular conceits of the early modern banquet, the skilful modelling of lifelike poultry. The jest of interchanging sweet sculptures for prepared poultry, which was in vogue in early modern court culture, is mentioned in the preface of *Delights for Ladies*, the standard early modern recipe book.⁴⁴ Moreover, another book advises on how to 'make Pies that the Birds may be alive in them, and fly out when it is cut up'. Both books blur the lines between life, food, and art to the astonishment of the banquet guests.⁴⁵

The aim of such books was to enable the genteel housewife to engage in a witty play on the senses of her guests, which reinforced the importance of her activities in the kitchen. Given the value of the sweet materials and the excellence and creative talent needed to model the banqueting stuffs, it is very likely that it was indeed the lady of the house, assisted by expert confectioners, who formed the intricate delights. Her skills were crucial to this play on the mismatch between sight and taste, which was a commonplace in the tradition of

43 Claxton "The Countess of Arundel's Dutch Pranketing Room", Appendix "An Inventory of all the Parcells of Purselin, Glasses & other Goods" 1.

44 Plat Hugh, *Delights for Ladies to Adorne their Persons, Tables, Closets, and Distillatories* [...] (London, H. Lownes – R. Young: 1628) fol. 2v. The book appeared in numerous editions from 1602, and promises to teach readers to 'make both marchpaine paste, and sugred plate, / And cast the same in formes of sweetest grace. / Each bird and foule, so moulded fom the life, / And after cast in sweet compounds of arte, As if the flesh and forme which nature gave, Did still remaine in every lim and part'.

45 Anonymous, *Epulario, or, The Italian Banquet: Wherein is shewed the maner how to dresse and prepare all kind of Flesh, Foules or Fishes* [...] (London, Wiliam Barley: 1598) 9. See also Wall W., *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: 2002) 2.

the banquet, the 'trompe l'œil dimension of cooking and confectionery'.⁴⁶ The paintings of the hen in its two states take up this aspect, thus visualizing the function of the room as a kitchen. The juxtaposition of two paintings hanging over the door to the room hints at the rupture between vision and taste in the banqueting course, emphasizes the interplay of the senses, and highlights the act of cooking. The artistic imitation of the cooked dish closes the circle by transferring the now digestible animal onto the indigestible canvas.⁴⁷

The only religious picture itemized in the Pranketing Room is a painting of Tobias, that is, of a subject that also engaged with food and its possible healing qualities. Tobias was guided by the angel Raphael on his journey and taught the secret of using the bowels of a fish as a medicine to cast out the demon torturing his bride and to heal the blindness of his father.⁴⁸ The subject refers to the complex connections between seeing, tasting, and healing. In the context of the Pranketing Room, it may also refer to the experiments with varied and exotic remedies that took place here. A considerable number of the recipes in the Countess's collection deal with diseases of the eye, and provide advice on how to prepare ointments for 'a stroak' or a 'mote', and for bruised, hot, red, 'blood-shotten', and sore eyes.⁴⁹ The painting also emphasizes the importance of the sense of sight and the connection between spiritual and physical healing, while questioning the nature of worldly remedies and the reliability of the senses. Imitation and perfection were topics that united the arts, from painting, medicine, and confectionery to the manufacturing of novel materials.

Domestic Play and Display

The walls of the room were covered with shelves displaying one of the earliest and greatest collections of porcelain in England. About five hundred porcelain dishes and porcelain figurines, as well as a large number of glasses, brass dishes, and ewers filled over fifty shelves. While the adjacent great dining hall was furnished with two large cupboards, one containing over one hundred

⁴⁶ Wall, *Staging Domesticity* 3.

⁴⁷ For the intersections between food and painting, see McFadden E., "Food, Alchemy, and Transformation in Jan Brueghel's *The Allegory of Taste*", *Rutgers Art Review* 30 (2014) 36–56.

⁴⁸ 6 *Tobit* 1:1–9.

⁴⁹ Countess of Arundel, *Natura Exenterata* Index 5.

white earthenware dishes, the other with about one hundred glasses, in the Pranketing Room all of the objects were readily accessible on wall shelves.

Lavish arrangements of porcelain dishes and sculptures together with shiny brass utensils adorned the walls of the Pranketing Room, pleasing the eye but also ready for use. The collecting and display of porcelain was a typical feature of Dutch interiors, and the porcelain may have contributed to calling the room Dutch.⁵⁰ While the aesthetic quality of the glazed porcelain was without doubt impressive, the inventory of the Pranketing Room attests to the use of most of the porcelain for the production of medicines, as it mentions 'a very large Deepe vessell of Purselin [...] to make some sorte of liquor with', and specifically notes that several small porcelain sculptures were there 'for ornament', implying that most of the other objects were there to be used.⁵¹ The physical properties and unknown origin, between natural substance and artisanal secret, made porcelain especially attractive for physicians and apothecaries, who started to store their herbs and drugs in long rows of porcelain pots similar to those on the shelves at Tart Hall.⁵²

Fragile and elusive, porcelain was an exotic artefact inextricably associated with the global sea trade.⁵³ Early modern artists and natural philosophers linked the translucent and shiny material to both artifice and nature, akin to glass as well as shells and corals. Its dual nature and the myths surrounding its origin connected the material to both medicine and chemistry. Its impermeability and the fact that it did not alter the properties of ingredients made porcelain dishes ideal for the preparation of various delicate concoctions, including medicines and sweetmeats.⁵⁴ The increasing popularity of porcelain made it a highly sought after courtly gift.⁵⁵ The thin and transparent material was highly

50 Bischoff C., "Women Collectors and the Rise of the Porcelain Cabinet", in Campen J. van – Eliëens T. (eds.), *Chinese and Japanese Porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age* (Zwolle: 2014) 171–189; and Claxton 'Tralucet as Amber' 216.

51 Claxton, "The Countess of Arundel's Dutch Pranketing Room" Appendix 5.

52 Weststeijn T., "Cultural Reflections on Porcelain in the 17th-Century Netherlands", in Campen – Eliëens, *Chinese and Japanese Porcelain* 213–229.

53 This led the Dutch to call Chinese porcelain 'kraakporselein' after its early Portuguese mode of transportation, the carrack, see Vinhais L. – Welsh J. (eds.), *Kraak Porcelain: The Rise of Global Trade in the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries* (London: 2008).

54 Weststeijn, "Cultural Reflections".

55 The English ambassador to India and friend of the Earl and Countess of Arundel, Sir Thomas Roe, was frustrated because of the difficulty of finding porcelain as a gift for his friends: 'I thought all India was a China shop, and that I should furnish all my Frenches with rarieties.' See Finlay R., *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley, CA – Los Angeles, CA: 2010) esp. 238–239.

esteemed, all the more so because its origin and manufacture remained a mystery in Europe until the eighteenth century.⁵⁶ The natural philosopher Francis Bacon, who died in Arundel House in 1626, constructs in *New Atlantis* the ideal society as one that knows the secret of porcelain manufacture.⁵⁷

Like porcelain, the two other dominant materials on the shelves, brass and crystal glass, were artificially created materials strongly connected to workshops and laboratories as spaces of transformation.⁵⁸ The objects in the room were at once the result of complex and at least partially secret workshop practices, linked to the performance of similar domestic practices, and embodied the possibilities of natural philosophy, labour, and art. They could also showcase works of nature, like bowls for fruit and the flower vases mentioned in the Pranketing Room inventory.

A large number of small sculptures made from porcelain are repeatedly described as 'for ornament', distinguishing them from the functional objects on display, which in turn indicates that other items on the shelves were used for banquets or for the preparation of foodstuffs and medicines. The small figurines could also have been used literally 'for ornament' as models or prototypes for sugar and marchpane decorations. In both cases, the functionality of the precious objects is highlighted here. As Claxton has argued, although the reflection of light on the different shiny surfaces of brass and porcelain was certainly considered important in shelving the utensils, the aesthetic aspect did not outweigh the functional one.⁵⁹ After all, the Countess was well versed in the art of moulding and casting sculptures from marchpane and sugar, and the many rare blanc-de-chine figures of men and animals that decorated the shelves of the room were ideal prototypes from which to manufacture the moulds.⁶⁰

56 For the invention of porcelain in Europe, see Chang K.M., "Toleration of Alchemists as a Political Question: Transmutation, Disputation, and Early Modern Scholarship on Alchemy", *Ambix* 54 (2007) 245–273.

57 Bacon Francis, *New Atlantis*, in Montagu B. (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon* 1 (Philadelphia, PA: 1841) 266: 'We have burials in several earths, where we put divers cements, as the Chinese do their porcelain. But we have them in greater variety, and some of them more fine.'

58 Dupré S., "Introduction", in Dupré S. (ed.), *Laboratories of Art: Alchemy and Art Technology from Antiquity to the 18th century*, Archimedes: New Studies in the History of Philosophy of Science and Technology 37 (Cham: 2014) vii–xix, at xii.

59 Claxton, "The Countess of Arundel's Dutch Pranketing Room" 192.

60 Schino J. di, "The Triumph of Sugar Sculpture in Italy 1500–1700", in Walker H. (ed.), *Look and Feel: Studies in Texture, Appearance and Incidental Characteristics of Food* (Devon: 1994) 203–206.

With few explicitly mentioned exceptions, the objects in the room were functional household items. Objects such as a 'white marble mortar', several Dutch wicker baskets, a milk strainer, a charger, and several funnels and skillets, as well as a considerable number of brass buckets, kettles, basins, and ewers clearly indicate the use of the banquetting house not only for the consumption, but also the production of artful sweets and medicines. While the large kitchen opposite the room also provided a space for the production of food-stuffs and the accumulation of domestic knowledge, it was not a suitable place for members of the high nobility such as the Countess and her circle. Taking into account the importance of a gentlewoman's skills and the expertise demonstrated by Lady Arundel and the other elite women of her network, not to mention the male experts and physicians, it becomes clear that the Pranketing Room must have functioned as an elegant and elaborate space for culinary and medicinal experiments by gentlewomen. As an experimental kitchen laboratory or rather a convertible multi-purpose location, the Pranketing Room provided an appropriate experimental space for the Countess and her household.⁶¹ Drawing upon the Elizabethan re-evaluation of empirical knowledge and practical experience, the Pranketing Room emphasized the significance of the Countess's insights into art, nature, and the human body.⁶²

Sweet Conceits and Medicines

Since it was one of the most expensive, coveted, and versatile ingredients that Aletheia Talbot used in preparing her medicines and the banquetting course, sugar was crucial to her practice. In England, artful 'sweetmeates', 'conceites', and other 'strange delightes' were the highlight of every formal dinner.⁶³ In Italy, where the Countess had lived for more than two years, hardly any recipe, from vegetables to meat, was considered complete without sugar.⁶⁴ Fine white cane sugar was a product of international trade and a motor of war and enslavement. Parallel to the construction of the Pranketing Room, England

61 See, however, Chew, *Female Art Patronage* 220: 'quotidian purposes may have been overshadowed by its uses for exhibition and creating visual effects'.

62 For a study of the importance of vernacular and domestic knowledge in early modern London, see Harkness, *The Jewel House*.

63 On 'banquetting stuffe', see Wilson, 'Banquetting Stuffe'.

64 Capatti A., *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History* (New York, NY: 2003) 97–100. On her travels in Italy, see Fletcher J., "The Arundels in the Veneto", *Apollo* 144 (1996) 63–69.

had regained St. Kitts, its only Caribbean colony, and was still struggling to establish a national supply of the high-demand commodity.⁶⁵

Venice, where Lady Arundel lived from 1620 to 1623, had for centuries been the most important global hub for the trade in sugar and confections.⁶⁶ During her stay in the Serenissima, the Countess famously made the acquaintance of Tizianello, who dedicated his biography of Titian to her.⁶⁷ The Countess first appears as a connoisseur of confectionery in the context of the Foscarini affair, when, following the Doge's apology for falsely accusing her of holding conspiratorial meetings at her residence, she was presented with fifteen basins of candles and confections, with which she 'seemed entirely satisfied.'⁶⁸ Venice was famous for its 'maraviglie dello zucchero', its 'wonders made of sugar': figures and various kinds of objects cast and sculpted in sugar and marchpane, often after models made by famous artists, and sometimes in a spectacular profusion of effort and material.⁶⁹ During her long residence as an honoured guest of the city, the Countess must have become acquainted with the Venetian tradition of these ephemeral artworks, as well as with the universal panacea of the Venetian theriac, a medical concoction made of sugar and venom.⁷⁰

Sugar was known to have powerful effects on the body and mind because of its properties, and was often combined with other potent substances.⁷¹ Most of the waters and of course all marmalades, confections, and tarts in

65 Mintz S., *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Early Modern History* (New York, NY: 1985) esp. 32–39.

66 Ouerfelli M., *Le Sucre: Production, commercialisation et usages dans la Méditerranée médiévale* (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2008) 444.

67 For Lady Arundel's sojourn in Venice, see Fletcher, "The Arundels in the Veneto" 63–70.

68 "Venice: April 1622, 21–30", in Hinds, *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* vol. 17, 292–311 (April 29).

69 Nollhac P. – Solerti A., *Il Viaggio in Italia di Enrico III Re di Francia* (Turin: 1890) 148–149. Henry III was presented, among other things, with 'una Pallade, una Giustizia, un San Marco e un David [...] animali, frutta, e molte altre cose, talune dorate or inargentate [...] più di duecento altri figure anch'esse di zucchero, rappresentanti papi, re, dogi e principi, le sette virtù, le arti liberali [...].'

70 Her recipes include a recipe for a 'most sovereign water which hath all the Vertues of Venice Treacle or Mithridate, and far surpasseth them', Countess of Arundel, *Natura Exenterata* 72. For the remedy, see Griffin J.P., "Venetian Treacle and the Foundation of Medicines Regulation", *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* 58 (2004) 317–325. See also the chapter on theriac in Leonhard K., *Bildfelder: Stilleben und Naturstücke des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: 2013) esp. 194–203.

71 Wall W., "Just a Spoonful of Sugar: Syrup and Domesticity in Early Modern England", *Modern Philology* 104 (2006) 149–172, at 156.

Lady Arundel's recipe book required either sugar or sugar candy. Using sugar to create entire edible miniature environments both combined the rarity and beauty of the material and hinted at the power that the precious substance represented. Sculptures fashioned from sugar first baffled the guests, and then invited them to enjoy the vanity of man-made objects and worldly riches, and to engage in the destruction of precious edible sculptures.⁷² Wendy Wall and Rebecca Earle have shown the important role of domestic transformation in the adaptation of foreign goods, especially spices and sugar, for national dishes. The sugar banquets in particular were situated between a national tradition of cooking and the new culinary possibilities that the global trade provided.

The hands of the skilled housewife had to transform the foreign substances in order to render them digestible and beneficial for European bodies.⁷³ Sugar in turn transformed fruits and flowers into durable preserves and enhanced their flavour, while added colorants enhanced their appearance, resulting in skilful conceits.⁷⁴ Syrups, conceits, and sweetmeats were enjoyed for both their taste and their medicinal effects. They were esteemed both as treats and as treatments, for their taste and for preservation. The use of the precious commodities of sugar, spices, and foreign fruits to create fantastic ephemeral ensembles and durable treats was one of the most important tasks of the early-modern English noblewoman, the 'chief agent' for turning the potent and potentially dangerous foreign materials into beneficial domestic delights.⁷⁵ The preparation of feasts and medicine at Tart Hall was an important link in the cycle of transformations that shaped early modern consumption, and the Countess of Arundel had to fulfil her guests' expectations by presenting them with intricate

72 This was lamented by Leonardo da Vinci in his kitchen notebook; see Ramzy D., "Dessert", in Goldstein D. (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets* (Oxford: 2015).

73 Wall W., *Staging Domesticity*, and Earle R., *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race, and Empire in the Colonial Spanish Empire 1492–1700* (New York, NY: 2012).

74 Capatti, *Italian Cuisine* 87: 'The systematic use of colorants [...] made the art of the cook rather like that of the painter.'

75 For the early modern English housewife as powerful mediator between the 'foreign' and the 'national' in the case of sugar, see Hall K.F., "Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century", in Traub V. (ed.), *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 1996) 168–190. The mediating role of the kitchen was also relevant for domestic policies, see Knoppers, "Opening the Queen's Closet".

sugar-works during the obligatory banqueting course.⁷⁶ The colour and form of the preserves and conceits were especially important.⁷⁷

Since making confections and sugar works was among the duties of a gentlewoman, recipes for syrups, jellies, candied fruits, and flowers also appear in the Countess of Arundel's recipe book. But while an entire section in the popular *Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen* treats the sweet conceits, only a small number of Lady Arundel's recipes are dedicated to the candying of fruit.⁷⁸ Most of the recipes in the book are for the treatment of common to severe illnesses and make use of the collected knowledge of previous generations as well as current networks and experts. These recipes promise relief from pain and aid for the whole range of medical problems.

The waters, salves, ointments, and plasters combined strange ingredients through heating, cooling, melting, dissolving, distilling, grinding, and mixing. Often requiring sugar, sugar candy, or *Manus Christi*, that is, flavoured hard candy speckled with gold leaf, the processes would leave the raw material unrecognizable, but result in drugs believed to be far more potent. By collecting and testing the recipes as well as experimenting with new waters and cures, Lady Arundel took part in the early modern endeavour of deciphering the book of nature.

In her selection and refinement of raw materials and her interest in the human body and its health, Lady Arundel was close to the physicians and painters of her time. Even if she did not invent most of the recipes, she guaranteed their effect, ennobling the cure and spreading knowledge about remedies. The sublimation of natural matter, the result and source of the early modern gentlewoman's confidence, connected her work to that of artists.⁷⁹ Her insights were crucial and there was fame to gain by the sharing of proven recipes and stories of successfully cured family members.

76 Hunter L., "'Sweet Secrets' from Occasional Receipt to Specialised Books: The Growth of a Genre", in Wilson, *'Banqueting Stuffe'* 36–60, at 40.

77 See, for example, the recipe for 'Lenton Gelly', Countess of Arundel, *Natura Exenterata* 446. In general, detailed instructions are given for preserving the colour of particular fruits or flowers, with different recipes for preserving 'pippins [apples] red' and 'pippins green', and for how to 'candy roseleaves naturally, all manners of flowers in their naturall colors', see Plat Hugh, *The Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen: Or the Art of Preserving, Conserving and Candying* (London, John Haviland: 1632) A2–A3. The work appeared in fifteen editions between 1608 and 1656.

78 Plat, *The Closet*.

79 On the intersections between art and medicine in early modern England, see Hanson, *The English Virtuoso* 24–42.

Food and medicines, transformed, had transformative effects. Sweets, spirits, meat, and fruit were combined and altered to find new cures, and traditional recipes were improved through observation and imported plants and goods. Through her knowledge of herbs and cures, the able early modern gentlewoman controlled the healthy humoral complexion of her families and guests' bodies like a painter does the colour on his canvas. Creating, nourishing, and curing the bodies around her, her powers rivalled those of the painter, while in her artificially flavoured and coloured banquets she might strive to compete with painted still lifes.

The Viewing Gallery

Opening onto the garden, the second-storey gallery around the Pranketing Room had a view of the gardens, as did the two long galleries that flanked the building on the north and south. The second-floor gallery allowed for a complete view of the ground floor as well, permitting those standing there to survey the activities going on between the shelves of porcelain below. The large windows on one side were complemented by a cycle of seven paintings on the three remaining sides. While the two long galleries in the main building featured Persian carpets and landscape paintings, the gallery of the Pranketing Room presented an ensemble of market and kitchen scenes and still life paintings.

Four of the paintings are described as showing figures: a cook, a fisherman, a fowler, and a fruiterer. Each of the professions represented in the paintings related to one of the four elements: the cook to fire, the fisherman to water, the fowler to air, and the fruiterer to earth. The paintings portray the professions responsible for the nourishment of the body, and each of them in turn related to one of the four bodily humours in Galenism: fire was connected to yellow bile, water to phlegm, water to blood, and earth to black bile. The food and drink resulting from the elements were thought to turn into the four bodily fluids.⁸⁰

80 Temkin O., *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY – London: 1973) 17. For the relationship among the four elements, food, and the body in early modern England, see Schoenfeldt M., *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 1999), and Paster G.K., *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY – London: 1993).

The three still life paintings between the four main scenes combined objects and animals associated with the four elements. The first of the three depicted hares, artichokes, and pigeons; the second, poultry, roots, white linen, and wine; and the third, hares and fowl.⁸¹ The still life paintings might be interpreted as alluding to the continuity and interdependence involved in balancing the humours in the human body through food and medicines, the most important task of the cook and the physician, and, through the imagination, the task of the painter as well. The combination of hares, artichokes, and pigeons evoked the interplay of humoral influences in the elements of earth and air. The grouping of poultry, roots, serge cloth, and a wine bottle, evoked a dense network of humoral and symbolic meanings, whilst the pairing of hares and fowl again combined earth and air.

The paintings described here are not among the ones attributed to a specific painter in the main inventory, which lists two series of the 'Four Seasons', one by Paolo Veronese and the other by Paolo Fiammingo. 'Six Kitchen scenes' are listed without an artist's name, however, which might refer to six of the seven pieces in the gallery.⁸² The portrayed fruit and animals presented the ideal state of the kitchen cupboard, only to be enjoyed in such variety either through the skill of the painter or of the gentlewoman experienced in the art of preservation. Both the housewife and the painter did their best to improve upon and outdo nature, and while the painter's creations lasted longer, they did not nourish the body. The Countess and her staff coloured fruit like a painter, and used marchpane and sugar-plate to form and cast objects like a sculptor. All three were concerned with defying worldly decay and manufacturing conceits, stimulating the senses, and delighting the mind.

The artificial prolonging of shelf life by means of sugar and alcohol can be seen as corresponding to the main aim of painting, to capture transient objects, a topos of early-modern art theory since Alberti. Both painting and confectionery are meant to deceive the eye and thus challenge the visual sense. To

81 Claxton, "The Countess of Arundel's Dutch Pranketing Room", Appendix 27: 'The Gallerie of the Pranketing Roome / is foure square, & on three sides thereof / stand seauen Pictures: The first of a Cooke, / the second of Hares, Hartichokes / & Pigeons. The third of a Fisherman the / Fourth of Poultry Rootes, sargenges & / uin dy Bottles: The Fifth of a Fowler / carrying Pigeons in his hand & wilde / Duckes lying by him: The sixth of a Hare / & severall kinde of Foules The seauenth / of a Fruterer with Hartichikes Plums & Cherries.'

82 See Hervey, *The Life, Correspondence and Collections*, Appendix v, The Arundel Inventory of 1655, n. 584. A similar series is the one by Joachim Beuckelaer now in the National Gallery in London.

be successful, culinary and painterly deception rely on more than one sense.⁸³ In the case of confectionery, the visual thrill of the conceit is matched by the oral pleasure of destroying and consuming the object, while in the case of painting the deception is completed and revealed in the desire to touch the objects depicted. The cycle of still life and market scenes lining the gallery of the Pranketing Room thus completed the intricate arrangement of the room as a visual extolment of the art of culinary deception and transformation.

Conclusion

At Tart Hall, and in the Pranketing Room in particular, the Countess of Arundel emphasized her role as a creator of nutriments and remedies and as a connoisseur of the arts, two fields strongly connected in the discourse on art and nature that shaped seventeenth-century thought and culture.⁸⁴ She shared interests with contemporary physicians, whose leading role as art collectors, writers, and critics in Britain and in Italy can be traced back to parallels between knowledge and the gaze in medicine and the arts, as well as to similarities in their philosophical approaches.⁸⁵ Negotiating the boundaries of art and nature in the preparation of medicines and banqueting stuffs, in the gardens and galleries, but most of all in the Pranketing Room, the Countess asserted her status and skills as equal to that of artists and physicians. In a work eventually published under the title *Natura Exenterata*, 'Nature unbowelled', that is, made durable, preserved, she compiled knowledge in the form of recipes and lists, struggling with death and decay like both physicians and artists.

An inventory drawn up after the death of the Countess in Amsterdam in 1654 details, room by room, a modest house on the Singel, decorated with paintings and precious objects, as well as glasses of waters, syrups, and preserves, and with several stills, alembics, and furnaces. The list starts with 'a small terrestriall Globe and frame. About forty Glasses great and small full and empty of Water, Sirup and about thirty potts of severall sorte of Sirups Conserves and

83 On the early modern scepticism towards the visual sense, see Clark S., *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: 2007).

84 Hanson, *The English Virtuoso* 24–57.

85 Frigo A., "Can one Speak of Painting if one Cannot Hold a Brush? Giulio Mancini, Medicine, and the Birth of the Connoisseur", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 73 (2012) 417–436.

preserves'. The first items mentioned in the inventory of the Countess's residence in exile were the results of distillation and preservation.⁸⁶

Tart Hall made the news one last time when its collection was sold following the death of the Countess's great-grandson in 1720. Some of the greatest pieces on sale were listed in *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, among them a 'Cabinet of Ebony, finely painted, and Silver Ornaments, in the Inner Room, and Mosaick Work, being the greatest Curiosity in Europe', jewels belonging to Elizabeth I, and the dagger of Henry VIII, the 'head of John Vanike, done in Oil by himself, he being the first that invented the Art of Painting in Oil.' The forty-page catalogue of the sale leaves no doubt that many items in the Countess of Arundel's collection either remained at Tart Hall when she left England for the Netherlands or were sent back after her death. Hundreds of porcelain dishes, bowls, and jars were sold alongside prints and drawings, paintings, crystal vases, agate cups, silver and gilt plates, and cabinets as well as bedsteads, chairs, and tables.⁸⁷

Whether she was experimenting with foodstuffs, rare and exotic goods such as sugar and nutmeg, chemicals like quicksilver, sulphur, and saltpetre, or acting as a collector of skilful works and instruments of art, the Countess's interest in art and nature shaped the spaces she inhabited. At Tart Hall she delighted her guests with her ability to use sugar to imitate and improve upon the look and taste of natural food—very much like the work of an artist with colours and easel. The art works encouraged discourse on the relationship between art and nature, and on imagined and real remedies, conceptualizing the observation of nature and mistrust of the senses as the basis for healing.⁸⁸ Lady Arundel's knowledge of natural philosophy and transformative processes shaped Tart Hall and the Pranketing Room as a site of practical knowledge, where the Countess strove to balance the elements by mediating between art and nature.

86 DEL 1/7, National Archives Kew, *Arundel v. Stafford* (1658), 684v.

87 *A Catalogue of the Pictures, Prints, Drawings, Jewels [...] and Variety of Curiosities; Being Part of the Old Arundel Collection and Belonging to the Late Earl of Stafford Together with Fine Japan and China* (London: 1720); see also Cesareo A., "His House was resplendent with wonderful paintings and fine ancient statues: Nuova luce sulla collezione Arundel da un inventario inedito", in Aurigemma M.G. (ed.), *Dal Razionalismo al Rinascimento: Per i quaranta anni di studi di Silvia Danesi Squarzina* (Rome: 2011) 378–384.

88 For a similar observance on the role of the senses in an early modern physician's interior, see Pamela Smith's study of the collection belonging to Franciscus Sylvius, professor of medicine in Leiden. Smith P., "Science and Taste: Painting, Passions and the New Philosophy in Seventeenth-Century Leiden", *Isis* 90 (1999) 421–461.

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The ‘Hortus Siccus’ as a Focal Point: Knowledge, Environment, and Image in Felix Platter’s and Caspar Bauhin’s Herbaria

Davina Benkert

As Paula Findlen and others have shown, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were marked by a rising interest in natural history. New tools and methods were developed to study nature in its different forms. Botany and anatomy were two newly established disciplines that were particularly fostered by many Italian as well as Northern European universities. Botanical gardens and anatomical theatres were founded and the resulting new modes and fields of study greatly expanded the field of medicine.¹ Being closely associated with medicine, medicinal botany became the most innovative branch of natural history. Various modes of studying plants were pursued with greater intensity, and naturalists emphasized the role of experience in the study of nature. University-trained physicians advocated medicinal botany as indispensable to medical expertise and argued for the introduction of corresponding training. Italy was at the forefront of this development, with professors of medicine giving demonstrations on plants in botanical gardens or on botanizing excursions. Other European universities started to appoint professors of natural history in the second half of the sixteenth century.² So, too, did the University of Basel in 1589, when a chair for botany and anatomy was created at the behest of its rector and professor of medicine, Felix Platter (1536–1614), who found his successor in Caspar Bauhin (1560–1623) in 1614. Both had studied medicine in Basel and abroad and thus became acquainted with the new practices of plant study.³ On many botanizing excursions to the surrounding countryside, Platter and Bauhin collected plants to press and assemble into a herbarium.

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- 1 See, for example, Findlen P., “Natural History”, in Park K. – Daston L. (eds.), *Early Modern Science*, The Cambridge History of Science 3 (Cambridge: 2006) 435–468, and Reeds K.M., *Botany in Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, Harvard Dissertations in the History of Science (New York, NY: 1991).
 - 2 Ogilvie B.W., *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, IL: 2006).
 - 3 Burckhardt A., *Geschichte der Medizinischen Fakultät zu Basel 1460–1900* (Basel: 1917) 144–149.

Through a fortunate coincidence, parts of both professors' herbaria have survived. The argument made in this chapter centres on the eight surviving volumes of Platter's herbarium as well as some 2500 specimens that remain from Bauhin's herbarium.

The creation of herbaria, as an important knowledge-making practice within Renaissance natural history, arose in the middle of the sixteenth century in Italy, possibly in the circle around Luca Ghini, a physician and founding director of the botanical garden in Pisa. Even though the first extant herbaria were assembled in Italy, the practice spread quickly to central and western Europe. More than twenty herbaria assembled before 1600 have been preserved until the present day.⁴ The first description of how to assemble a herbarium, including a recipe for the glue to use, was published in 1606 by Adrian van den Spiegel, a Flemish physician who practiced in Padua.⁵ He called the herbarium a 'hortus hiemalis', a winter garden. Another contemporary term was 'hortus siccus'. The word 'herbarium' was used for printed herbals or for the study of plants ('res herbaria') more generally; it became a common term to describe a collection of pressed plants towards the end of the seventeenth century.⁶ While the practice of assembling a herbarium remained comparatively rare in the second half of the sixteenth century, it had become truly widespread by 1650.⁷ By 1751, Linnaeus would maintain that a 'herbarium is better than any picture, and is necessary for any botanist'.⁸

A typical herbarium consisted of dried and pressed plants mounted onto sheets of paper (attached by glue, small strips of paper, or stitches), labelled with their names, and bound into a book. This form became so widespread during the seventeenth century that herbaria using plants from the botanical garden at Padua were produced for sale to amateurs of botany who were passing by.⁹ Several of these books are now kept in the Sloane Herbarium of the Natural History Museum in London and they look strikingly similar both in format and layout. Arranged in alphabetical order, four to six plants were glued

4 Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing* 165.

5 Spiegel Adrian van den, *Isagoges in Rem Herbaria Libri duo* (Padua, Paulus Meietus: 1606).

6 Arber A., *Herbals: Their Origin and Evolution* (Cambridge: 2010) 142.

7 Saint-Lager J.B., *Histoire des herbiers* (Paris: 1885) 15–22.

8 'Herbarium praestat omni icone, necessarium omni botanico'. Linnaeus Carl, *Philosophia Botanica* (Stockholm, Godofr. Kiesewetter: 1751) 7.

9 Jarvis C.E., "Seventeenth Century Collections from the Botanic Garden of Padua in the Herbarium of Sir Hans Sloane", *Museologia Scientifica* 14 Suppl. (1998) 145–154. I am grateful to Dr. Charles Jarvis, curator of the Sloane Herbarium at the Natural History Museum in London, for this information.

onto a page and labelled in a clear hand.¹⁰ Both the Platter and the Bauhin herbaria, however, differ distinctly in form and function from these prototypical herbaria, and they were also far more than educational souvenirs acquired on a Grand Tour, which the herbaria created at Padua may well have been. Moreover, because the herbaria were assembled at the same time, in the same place, by compilers bound by a personal relationship, and because they contain contextual references, they represent a rare moment of concentration that allows us to analyse them and the environment that produced them. In a close reading of the two herbaria, I enquire into their function and audience as well as how they were produced, constituted, and developed in order to attain their individual formats. Which actors were involved in what way, and what kinds of knowledge were contained in the herbaria in what form? When we address these questions, the herbaria reveal their qualities as objects, which can serve as analytical focal points for a close examination of the intersection between different reference systems, systems of knowledge, modes of representation, and self-fashioning.

In the following, I will use the herbaria as a focus to analyse three layers of knowledge culture that they incorporate. First, I will consider the herbaria as systems of knowledge that contributed to the contemporary discourse on the classification and nomenclature of plants. Platter's and Bauhin's herbaria both illustrate the collected plant knowledge of related actors in their time, and, once assembled, constitute a potent new piece of knowledge that could be put to various uses. Second, I will take a closer look at the social and institutional context that informed both scholars, namely the university and the growing establishment of botany as an academic discipline in Basel, as well as the countryside and gardens surrounding the city that provided the sensory element for assembling a herbarium. The third part is dedicated to the relationship between specimen and pictorial representation that Platter played with in his herbarium, using differences in visual media in his processes of description and classification. In some concluding remarks, I will discuss how the form and function of both herbaria influenced their afterlife, which led to their survival under very different conditions.

10 H.S. 28 and H.S. 29, respectively, in Dandy J.E. (ed.), *The Sloane Herbarium: An Annotated List of the Horti Sicci Composing it. With Biographical Accounts of the Principal Contributors* (London: 1958).

Systems of Knowledge: Classifying Plants

Felix Platter probably started his herbarium while studying in Montpellier from 1552 to 1557.¹¹ He noted next to the plant *Chamaepytis altera* or *Iva Moscata Monspeliensis* (bot. *Ajuga Iva* or *herb* or *musk ivy*) that he had collected it in 1554 in Montpellier, suggesting that he had begun pressing collected plants by this date, at the latest.¹² A very brief mention of the practice can also be found in his autobiography. In the chapter on his studies in Montpellier, he reports on his father's fears for his son's professional future, and states that the uncertainty of establishing himself as a doctor spurred him on to study:

Solcher drib macht, daß ich neben stettigem studieren und lectionen zehören, mich seer übte in praeparationen allerley artznien wol in der apoteck ufzemercken, das mir hernoch gar wol bekommen, und neben insamlung viler kreuter, die zierlich in papir innmacht, sunderlich in der anatomy seer mich ze ieben begerte.¹³

The botanist Walter Rytz's book on Platter's herbarium of 1933 was the first publication on the subject. In addition to the textual evidence within the herbarium, which is very sparse, Rytz analysed the watermarks of the paper used to mount the specimens. These allowed him to conclude that Platter had constructed his herbarium in two distinct phases. In the first one, dated roughly 1556 to 1586, he mounted plants onto sheets of soft paper and bound them. Later, from 1595 at the earliest, Platter chose to change the format of his herbarium: Most of the specimens mounted earlier were cut out and glued onto heavier, folio-sized paper bearing the watermarks of paper mills in Basel from between 1595 and 1603. More recent plant material was then pasted directly onto the larger and stronger sheets of paper.¹⁴ Once this assembly was

11 Rytz W., *Das Herbarium Felix Platters: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Botanik des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Basel: 1933) 30.

12 Platter Felix, *Herbarium* (1554–1614), 8 vols. (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, BBB ES 70.5) vol. 5, 79.

13 'The desire to learn made me follow with attention not only the lectures and ordinary studies, but also the preparation of remedies in the pharmacy, a matter I found very useful later. Further, I collected plants, and arranged them properly on paper. But my principal study was anatomy.' Platter Felix, *Tagebuch: Lebensbeschreibung, 1536–1567*, ed. V. Lötscher, *Basler Chroniken* 10 (Basel – Stuttgart: 1976) 209. English: *Beloved Son Felix: The Journal of Felix Platter. A Medical Student in Montpellier in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. S. Jennet (London: 1961) 88.

14 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 21–22.

completed, the sheets were bound into eighteen volumes, each about 30–40 cm in size, with cardboard covered in parchment and painted dark green.¹⁵ The plants and cut-outs were glued onto the sheets before binding, which is evident from the fact that some of the superscripts were cut off when the paper was cut to size for binding.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the paper bundles must have been assembled before the plants were re-arranged: while the plants were glued onto the right-hand page, corresponding images are displayed on the left-hand page, thus usually on another sheet of paper. Hence, the order and nesting of the supporting sheets had to be fixed before the reordering of the collection was begun, even if the sheets had not yet been bound into volumes.

While the textual evidence and watermarks suggest that Platter worked on his herbarium continuously over several decades, the reorganization and binding of his collection took place at a comparatively late date. There are several possible reasons for this. By the late 1590s, his collection had reached a fairly large size—three-quarters of the total surviving 800 specimens had been assembled by then—and might have become unmanageable enough that a new organization and binding were considered practical. Furthermore, the sources and handwriting in the herbarium indicate that Platter's younger half-brother, Thomas II, likely helped with the reorganization and provided specimens while on botanizing and study trips of his own.¹⁷ Second, Platter seems to have been intent on consolidating and documenting his collection more generally from about 1595. He created a long inventory of natural objects—precious and semi-precious stones, rocks, stuffed and dried animals, soil specimens, and the like—as well as of his picture collection in this period. It is possible that he was inspired to do so by the very detailed inventory of the collections of his late friend, Basilius Amerbach, with whom he had corresponded about collecting and also exchanged objects.¹⁸ Third, even though binding the collection meant fixing it and rendering it immobile, it had the advantage of making it far easier to display it to visitors, lessening the probability of damage, and disorder by repeated handling. Platter's collection was becoming increasingly famous and was considered a must-see for informed travellers to Basel. In 1579 and 1580, two famous Frenchmen visited Basel and Platter's house and left an account of their impressions of his collection. While

15 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 4. The exact number of volumes is unknown; I follow Rytz's reconstruction for the estimated total number.

16 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 8.

17 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 65.

18 Landolt E., "Materialien zu Felix Platter als Sammler und Kunstfreund", *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 72 (1972) 245–306, at 247.

both admired it, Jacques Auguste de Thou did not mention the herbarium, but dwelled on the collections of fossils and insects that Platter had acquired from the famous naturalist Conrad Gessner's heirs after the latter's death.¹⁹ Michel de Montaigne, on the other hand, gave a long description of the herbarium:

Entre autre choses, il dresse un livre de simples qui est déjà fort avancé; et au lieu que les autres font peindre les herbes selon leurs couleurs, luy a trouvé l'art de les coller toutes naturelles si proprement sur le papier, que les moindres feuilles et fibres y apparoissent, come elles sont; et il feuillette son livre, sans que rien en eschappe; et monstra des simples qui y estoient collés y avoit plus de vint ans.²⁰

Fourth, while reordering, Platter used the system laid out in the book by his former student and current colleague Caspar Bauhin, *Phytopinax* (*Index of Plants*), published in 1596. It was the most comprehensive system for classifying plants available at the time and in all likelihood Platter would have discussed it with Bauhin while the latter was writing it. Interestingly, while no discernible naming system is applied to the older specimens, the newer ones are all labelled according to the nomenclature set out in the *Phytopinax*.²¹ Thus Platter clearly endorsed Bauhin's work. This professional affinity was fostered by their long acquaintance. Bauhin, who matriculated in 1575, had studied medicine in Basel under Felix Platter before leaving to study abroad. They shared interests in botany and anatomy and were instrumental in the introduction of both subjects into the teaching curriculum of the University of Basel.²²

19 Thou Jacques-Auguste de, *La vie de Jacques-Auguste de Thou*, ed. A. Teissier-Ensminger (Paris: 2007) 380–383.

20 'Among other things, he is preparing a book of simples, which is already well advanced; and whereas the others have the herbs painted according to their colours, he has discovered the art of pasting them in their natural state on the paper so that the tiniest leaves and fibres appear there just as in nature, and he turns the leaves of his book without anything dropping out; and he showed simples that had been pasted there for more than twenty years.' Montaigne Michel de, *Journal de Voyage*, ed. Rigolot F. (Paris: 1992) 15. English: *The Complete Works of Montaigne: Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*, trans. D.M. Frame (London: 1958) 878.

21 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 26.

22 Fuchs-Eckert H.P., "Die Familie Bauhin in Basel, Teil 2. Caspar Bauhin: Erster ordentlicher Professor der Anatomie und Botanik an der Universität Basel", *Bauhinia* 6 (1979) 311–329, at 312.

The fact that Platter does not mention Bauhin in the surviving herbarium volumes, despite their close relationship at the university, might suggest that he was rather protective of his own authority, and calls the amicable relationship between the two men into question. This competition can also be seen in some of their anatomical work.²³ However, the herbarium itself seems to indicate that their relationship was not defined solely by competition. Indeed, the last third of the herbarium contains plants that Bauhin had not listed in the *Phytopinax*. Instead, they can be found in the *IIINAE Theatri Botanici* (*Index to the Botanical Theatre*), a publication offering the names and classification of some 6000 plants, which Bauhin published in 1623, just one year before his death.²⁴ But since Platter himself died in 1614, he must have used drafts of the *Pinax* before its publication to finish the organization of his own herbarium. Consequently, the transfer of knowledge occurred before the publication of the book while it was still a work in progress—one to which Platter must have had repeated and intense access, which demonstrates that the two men regularly collaborated and cooperated.

In spite of these close associations between Bauhin's botanical work and Platter's herbarium, the herbarium that Bauhin assembled was strikingly different in both form and function. In general, this not yet standardized format is typical of many early herbaria, which covered a wide range with regard to the plants chosen, the number of names or descriptions added, the binding, and the extent of embellishment.²⁵ It is a function of the novelty of the format, and of the fact that the assembly of herbaria was described orally and demonstrated practically before printed descriptions such as those contained in Van den Spiegel's *Isagoges in rem herbaria* (*Introduction to the Study of Plants*) became available from 1606. The differences between Platter's and Bauhin's herbaria, as well as their commonalities, reveal the potency and flexibility of a knowledge practice that could be adopted and adapted by different scholars for different purposes. In Bauhin's case, the herbarium was first and foremost a scientific tool of analysis that he used to construct his new system of classification, as well as to keep track of synonyms. The pressed plants were kept folded into sheets of paper with labels recording their names and sometimes their

23 See the contribution by Sarah-Maria Schober in this volume.

24 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 27; Bauhin Caspar, *IIINAE Theatri Botanici* (Basel, Ludwig König: 1623), s.n. (p. 2 of the introduction). This title will be cited as *Pinax* in the following.

25 See, for example, the *Herbarium vivum*, which was completed by Caspar Ratzenberger in 1598 and is today in the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha (Chart. A 153).

place of origin, as well as cut-out images in some cases [Fig. 8.1].²⁶ Bauhin's collection allegedly contained some 4000 plants, of which 2500 have survived until today. The form of the herbarium rendered it highly impractical for display, as specimens were very fragile and could be crushed or mislaid, and the equally loose labels could be mixed up.²⁷ Nevertheless, in the introduction to the *Pinax*, Bauhin informed readers that he was willing to show his *hortus siccus* to interested visitors.²⁸

However, the loose form of his herbarium allowed him to continually rearrange the plants and thus test new or different systems of classification while he worked on his botanical publications, the *Phytopinax* and the *Pinax*, which were mainly concerned with naming and classifying plants. Caspar Bauhin conceived of the *Pinax* first of all as an index to his planned magnum opus, the *Theatrum Botanicum*, which was to describe all of the known plants of his time. But Bauhin died before completing the work; the first and only volume of which was published by his son in 1658.²⁹ Second, the *Pinax* was also a means to classify and systematize the plants to be described in the *Theatrum*. The new system he developed also made it easier to cope with the hugely increased number of known plants native both to Europe and the parts of the world Europe traded with and where specimens could be procured. What seems at first glance to be an absolutely overwhelming list of names was in fact a powerful tool for inserting new plants into the botanical mental map of the time and describing their relationships to each other and to other known plants, while at the same time providing all known synonyms for each plant with references to the pertinent literature.³⁰ It is thus possible to verify Bauhin's classification and identification of plants with different names as one and the same by looking up all the plants listed as synonyms in the publications describing them.

26 Selosse P., "Richesse linguistique et épistémique des herbiers de la Renaissance", in Pierrel R. – Reduron J.-P. – Guy P. – Charpin A. (eds.), *Les herbiers* (Villers-lès-Nancy: 2004) 191–207, at 194.

27 This apparently happened frequently after Bauhin's death. See Selosse, "Richesse linguistique" 195.

28 Bauhin, *Pinax* s.n. (p. 2 of the introduction).

29 Bauhin Caspar, *Theatri Botanici sive Historiae Plantarum ex veterum et recentiorum placitis propriaeque observatione concinnatae* (*Botanical Theatre or History of Plants Prepared from Old and Recent Sources and Personal Observation*), ed. Johann Caspar Bauhin (Basel, Johannes König: 1658).

30 Selosse P., "The Underlying Pattern of the Renaissance Botanical Genre *Pinax*", in Skaffari J. – Peikola M. – Carroll R. – Hiltunen R. – Warvik B. (eds.), *Opening Windows on Texts and Discourses of the Past* (Amsterdam – Philadelphia, PA: 2005) 161–178.

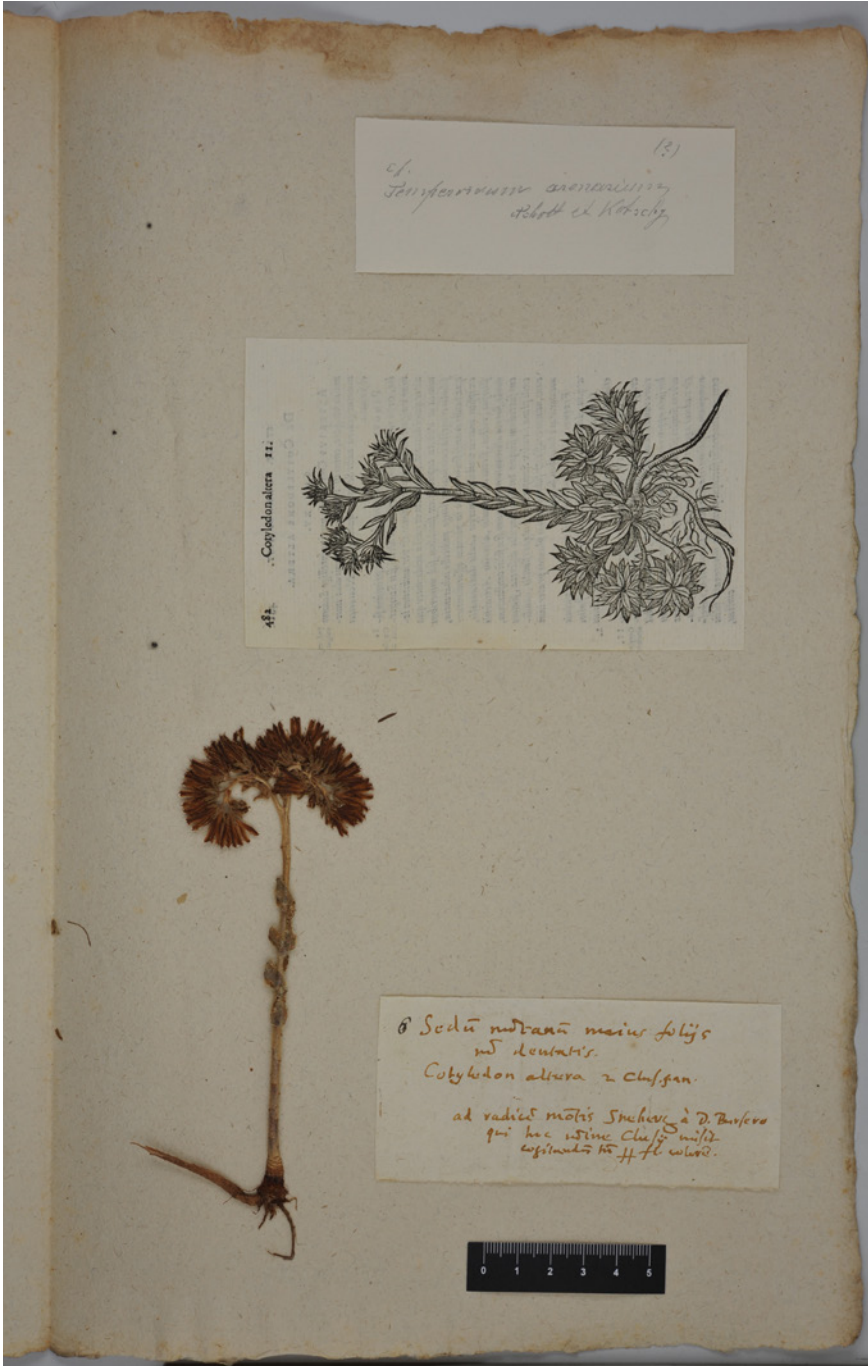


FIGURE 8.1 Bottom left: "*Sedum montanum maius folijs non dentatis*", dried plant on paper. Top right: Carolus Clusius(?), "*Cotyledon altera*", cut-out woodcut, in Caspar Bauhin, *Herbarium* (ca. 1577–1624). Basel, Botanisches Institut.
IMAGE © BOTANISCHES INSTITUT, BASEL.

On the labels enclosed with each plant, Bauhin recorded the name of the plant according to his nomenclature as well as all the synonyms for the same plant that he had found in other botanical works. They were adapted according to Bauhin's new findings and insights, and it is possible to deduce much of the logic of his nomenclature from a close and linguistic analysis of the way he corrected his names for the plants.³¹ Bauhin's herbarium was thus a tangible first draft of the *Pinax*, a version with more sensory information than the published book and all the mobility and flexibility of index cards. This interpretation of the herbarium as a card index (*Zettelkasten*) hints at the specific form of discursive knowledge production that it made possible.³² Bauhin's practice of knowledge making, which hinged on modes of recording and keeping information together in a particular manner, produced a new botanical classification and differs strikingly from the form of representation evident in Platter's herbarium.³³ But the specimen and the information relating to it were still kept together. Thus, although the form of Bauhin's herbarium closely resembles the loose-leaf herbarium advocated by Linnaeus, Bauhin did not implement the shift in the organization of knowledge that Linnaeus would by separating the specimen from the relevant information.³⁴

The *Pinax* is visually striking because of the absolute lack of images, which is due to its character as an index and concordance. The dominant model of knowledge organization was the indexical list; most of the omitted sensory and botanical information was intended for the *Theatrum Botanicum*, which was, after all, supposed to be the final product. Both the herbarium and the garden were thus tools of study that enabled Bauhin to produce the abstract knowledge he published in his books, and they had a very immediate and practical value for his work. Even though Platter did not use his herbarium as Bauhin did—he did not publish on plants at all—it was nevertheless a valuable tool of study that enabled him to store and retrieve knowledge about plants while at the same time serving as a means of self-fashioning and assuring him a place on the European map of scholars. Moreover, both botanizing and

31 Selsos, "Richesse linguistique" 199.

32 See Krajewski M., *Paper Machines: About Cards & Catalogs, 1548–1929* (Cambridge, MA – London: 2011) for a slightly earlier but similar use of the method by Conrad Gessner.

33 See Kittler F., *Aufschreibesysteme* (4th rev. ed. Munich: 2003) for the influence of technical and technological modes of recording on epistemological discourses.

34 Charmantier I. – Müller-Wille S., "Carl Linnaeus's Botanical Paper Slips (1767–1773)", *Intellectual History Review* 24 (2014) 215–238, at 222–225.

assembling herbaria were increasingly part of the social and knowledge practices of naturalists and botanists, and therefore helped both Platter and Bauhin to claim a place in the scientific community.

The Herbarium as Social Practice: The Institutional Context

In Basel, many of these communal botanical activities took place in the orbit of the university. One botanical practice that emphasized the study of living plants in their natural habitat was the botanizing excursion.³⁵ Felix Platter frequently mentioned going on botanizing trips around Montpellier—he called the activity 'Herbatum ire'.³⁶ Once he had returned to Basel, he continued this practice in the surrounding countryside and on Mount Pilatus near Lucerne, where he frequently walked with his friend Renward Cysat, an apothecary and town clerk there.³⁷ In 1570, just before Felix Platter was appointed professor of medicine and city physician, the university drew up new regulations stipulating the creation of a third chair of medicine dedicated to anatomy and botany. In 1578, medical students petitioned for the appointment of this professor, with the strong support of the two existing professors of medicine. Because of financial difficulties, Caspar Bauhin was not appointed to this post until 1589.³⁸ From 1578 onwards, Felix Platter had begun taking students on field trips.³⁹ Caspar Bauhin, too, was particularly interested in studying plants in their natural habitat. At the age of sixteen, his interest had been aroused by Galen's advice to inspect plants often and personally.⁴⁰ During his studies he had then spared 'no labour, no trouble, and no expenditure' to explore plants in their 'natural habitat'.⁴¹ As a professor of botany for more than thirty years, he had taken his students on botanizing excursions not just twice a year, as prescribed by the statutes of the medical faculty, but once a month in spring,

35 Reeds K.M., "Renaissance Humanism and Botany", *Annals of Science* 33 (1976) 519–542, at 538.

36 Platter, *Tagebuch* 174.

37 Platter, *Tagebuch* 174 and 219; Liebenau T. von, "Felix Platter von Basel und Renward Cysat von Luzern", *Basler Jahrbuch* (1900) 85–109.

38 Reeds, "Renaissance Humanism" 536–537.

39 Fuchs, "Familie Bauhin in Basel" 312.

40 Reeds, "Renaissance Humanism" 528.

41 '[...] Plantas locis natalibus inspiciendo, nullis laboribus, nullis molestiis, nullisque sumptibus pepercimus [...]'. Bauhin, *Pinax* s.n. (p. 1 of the introduction).

summer and autumn to teach them to inspect and recognize plants. In fact, while still officially teaching Greek, he had started giving informal lessons in botany.⁴²

Bauhin even wrote a teaching tool to use on his field trips—a pocket-sized guide to the local flora, *Catalogus plantarum circa Basiliensis sponte nascentium* (*Catalogue of Plants that Grow Naturally Around Basel*), an early example of a new botanical genre that emerged at the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁴³ It was specifically produced to teach medical students about local plants and some copies of Bauhin's *Catalogus* were even bound with interleaved blank pages to leave ample room for student's notes [Fig. 8.2].⁴⁴ The book listed local plants and their synonyms according to Bauhin's own system, which was an opportunity to test and advertise it at the same time. Because botanising trips could not take place during winter, herbaria were proposed as a substitute, which is also evident from one of their contemporary names, *hortus hiemalis* or winter garden. However, the specimens still underwent a substantial change in appearance in the process of drying and pressing, and relying solely on them was problematic.⁴⁵ Bauhin's solution was to show students the dried plant in his herbarium immediately after they saw the living plant on the field trip, thus linking the pressed specimen with the stronger sensory impression of the living one. This mnemonic function of the herbarium was also used by naturalists who had collected the bulk of their specimens themselves, as was the case for Felix Platter.⁴⁶ Through his many field trips, he knew the local flora well and was proud of this knowledge. In 1593, for instance, Platter assured Cysat that the plant 'Asphodelus folio tenui', an 'Asphodelus with thin leaves' was not a 'fremd', i.e. 'foreign' plant, but that it could indeed be found on Mount Pilatus and elsewhere. He did not grow it in his own garden, implying that it was too common for that.⁴⁷ Incidentally, there is no plant bearing this exact name in the herbarium, although he had several other Asphodeli.

42 Reeds, "Renaissance Humanism" 536.

43 Bauhin Caspar, *Catalogus plantarum circa Basiliensis sponte nascentium* (Basel, Johann Jakob Genath: 1622); Cooper A., *Inventing the Indigenous: Local Knowledge and Natural History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 2007) esp. 72–80.

44 Reeds, "Renaissance Humanism" 539.

45 Ogilvie, *Science of Describing* 170.

46 Ogilvie, *Science of Describing* 172–173.

47 Letter of 25 August 1593 from Felix Platter to Renward Cysat, in Liebenau, "Felix Platter" 102–103.

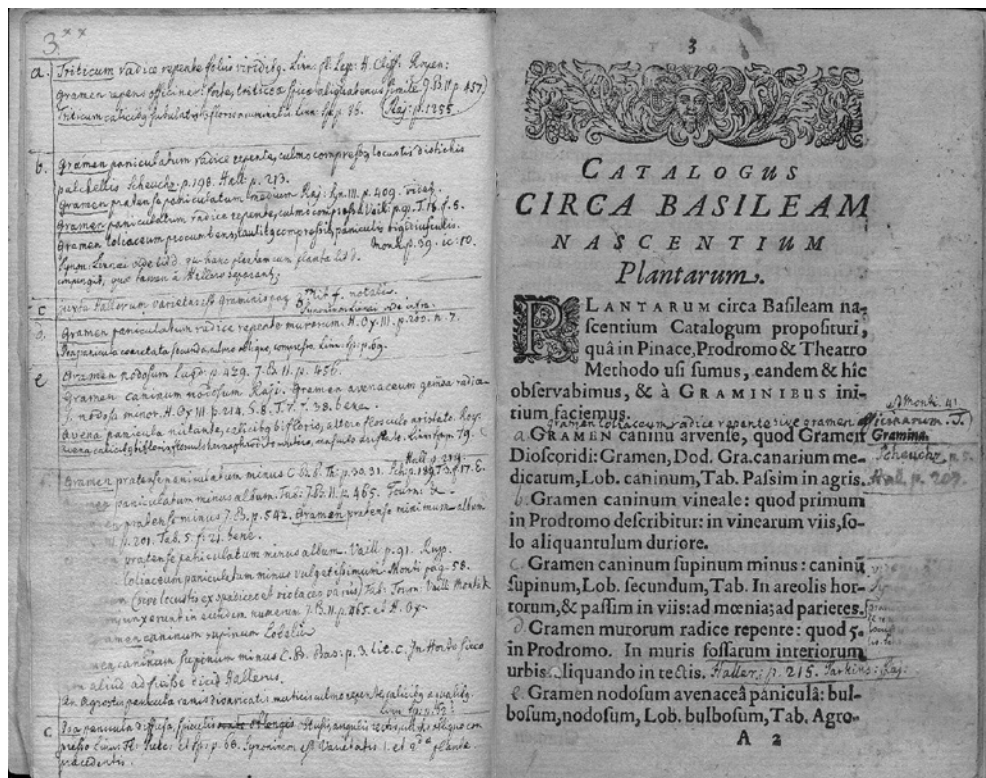


FIGURE 8.2 Caspar Bauhin, *Catalogus plantarum circa Basiliensis sponte nascentium* (Basel, Johann Jakob Genath: 1622). Interleaved copy with annotations by Werner von Lachenal. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (Bot 1209).

IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.

Both Felix Platter and Caspar Bauhin were keen gardeners, and their gardens were well known to contemporaries. In 1601, the professor of botany in Leiden, Pieter Pauw, listed Bauhin and Platter as great 'keepers of gardens' alongside Ulisse Aldrovandi and Pietro Bembo in his catalogue of Leiden's botanical garden.⁴⁸ Like the field trips, the gardens—and the botanical gardens—allowed for hands-on teaching. After the University of Basel founded

48 Swan C., "Making Sense of Medical Collections in Early Modern Holland: The Uses of Wonder", in Smith P.H. – Schmidt B. (eds.), *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400–1800* (Chicago, IL: 2007) 199–213, at 210.

its botanical garden in 1589, Giovanni Pona, an apothecary from Verona and correspondent of Bauhin's, wrote to offer to send seeds for the new garden, to fill it up quickly.⁴⁹ According to Claudia Swan, the gardens were a subset of natural history collections and often co-extensive with them.⁵⁰ This is evident from the space accorded to the garden in Platter's correspondence, especially with Renward Cysat. They frequently discussed the acclimatization of new plants such as tulips in their gardens and how to best protect delicate plants from winter temperatures. Indeed, at one point Platter declared that his garden had invaded his house because he had had to bring so many delicate plants inside.⁵¹ Both botanists included plants from their own gardens in their herbaria and made particular note of this. The phrases 'ex horto meo', 'us minem Garten' ('from my garden'), are recorded next to some specimens.⁵² The labels in the herbaria contain many referential cues and deserve to be studied in detail.

Both Caspar Bauhin and Felix Platter labelled their pressed specimens: Platter by writing directly on the sheet the plant was mounted on, Bauhin by writing on small paper labels he kept with the pressed plant. Some of the labels, albeit a minority, record the origin of the specimen, be it the garden of either Platter or Bauhin, a locality where the plant was found, or the person who had given them the plant. This last category includes comparatively few items. This can mean either that the collectors often forgot, or that they did not deem it necessary to record a place of origin. The list of persons Platter mentions in his Herbarium is telling. He was given plants by Heinrich Cherler, a local physician, Conrad Gessner, the famous naturalist from Zurich, the Dutchman Carolus Clusius and the German Joachim Camerarius, both eminent naturalists, Christoph Wexig, who studied in Basel, accompanied Ogier Ghislain de

49 Pona Giovanni, Letter of 1 March 1607 from Verona to Caspar Bauhin, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Frey-Gryn Mscr II vol. 1, Bl.101.

50 Swan C., "Of Gardens and other Natural History Collections in Early Modern Holland: Modes of Display and Patterns of Observation", in Felfe R. – Wagner K. (eds.), *Museum, Bibliothek, Stadtraum: Räumliche Wissenordnungen 1600–1900*, Kultur: Forschung und Wissenschaft 12 (Berlin: 2010) 173–190, at 175.

51 Letter of 25 August 1593 from Felix Platter in Basel to Renward Cysat, in Liebenau, "Felix Platter" 102–103.

52 See, for example, Platter Felix, *Herbarium (1554–1614)* vol. 3, 183; or Selosse, "Richesse linguistique" 194.

Busbecq to Constantinople, and sent back plants from Egypt, Nicolas Race, surgeon to the king of France, and Martin Chmieleck, a local physician and botanist of noble Polish origin.⁵³ On the one hand, Platter recorded plants given to him by some of the most renowned authorities on botany and medicine of his time. By including their names in his herbarium, he could show the scope of his professional network. On the other hand, Platter demonstrated his place in the scientific networks of his hometown, as a colleague of Gessner, who held a similar position in Zurich, but also as a teacher to physicians who had attained eminent positions of their own, such as Cherler and Chmieleck.⁵⁴ It is thus likely that Platter carefully selected whose names would appear in his collection: Eminent authorities who added to his prestige, but also local connections who were likely to see his herbarium and might be annoyed if they were not mentioned as having given him a gift.⁵⁵ It is well established that Platter liked to show off his well-known collection, which the cognoscenti travelling through Basel were keen to see.

The notation of the plant's donor on Caspar Bauhin's labels [Fig. 8.3] served a similar purpose, albeit through a different, secondary medium. The loose form marks the specimen as a tool of study rather than an exhibit. Nevertheless, the exact labelling of specimens with regard to both name and origin was important to Bauhin, who used his herbarium as a tool to compile his botanical publications. In the *Pinax*, beneath the entries he noted that he had been sent specimens, thus providing additional justification for his identification—he had seen an actual specimen of the plant instead of just working from the literature—and, perhaps more importantly, demonstrating the wide reach of his network of correspondents who supplied him with plants and seeds. In addition, mentioning his suppliers functioned as a means of thanking them, which was underlined by the very long list of their names at the beginning

53 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 13–14.

54 Heinrich Cherler became court physician in Montbéliard in 1597. Burckhardt, *Geschichte der Medizinischen Fakultät zu Basel* 129 and 133.

55 Interestingly, neither Bauhin nor Cysat are mentioned by name in the herbarium, even though both contributed to it—Bauhin through his system of classification and Cysat through many plants sent to Platter as well as through botanizing trips he undertook with Platter on Mount Pilatus near Lucerne, which is frequently mentioned in the herbarium as a collection site. Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 12.

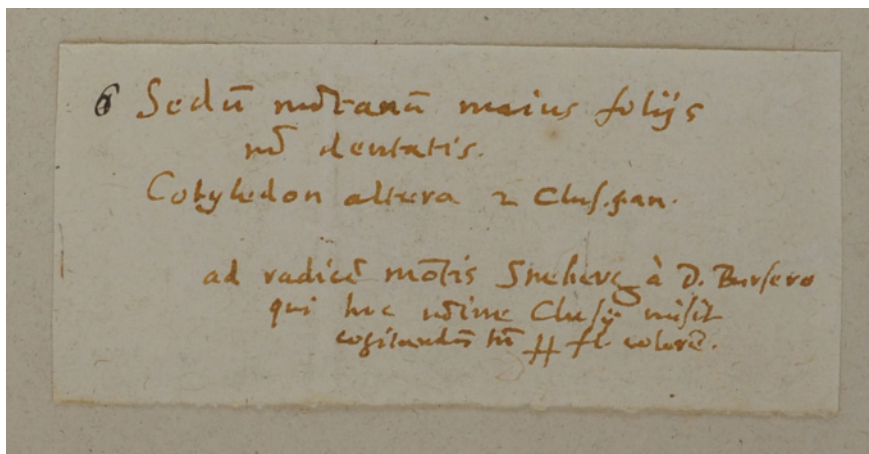


FIGURE 8.3 Detail of Fig. 8.1: Label containing the name of the plant and its origin.

of his book. By putting the list in alphabetical order, he accorded the same importance to very famous suppliers as to lesser-known persons, creating and displaying a network that was centred upon himself.

For both Platter and Bauhin, labelling specimens with the names of the giver fulfilled the function of displaying their participation and position in a network of naturalists to viewers of their collection. While Platter chose to show his actual collection, Bauhin used the new form he had developed for the *Pinax* to the same end, but with a greatly expanded audience. Platter seems to have been very focused on his collection, which meant maintaining a certain exclusivity, as only persons who had travelled to Basel and gained admittance to his house (be it because of their name or in exchange for a token gift) could boast of having seen the collection. Bauhin pursued a different, more encyclopaedic and universal goal in the *Pinax*. Platter's very careful reordering and binding of the sheets, which turned the herbarium into a showpiece within his collection, further emphasises the aspect of display.

Curious Plants and Desirable Images

The typical format for a double page in Platter's herbarium consists of the pressed plant glued to the right-hand page, while one or more images of the same plant were glued to the left-hand page [Fig. 8.4]. There are 650 woodcuts, most of them coloured, 141 watercolours, and about 800 plants. Of the wood-

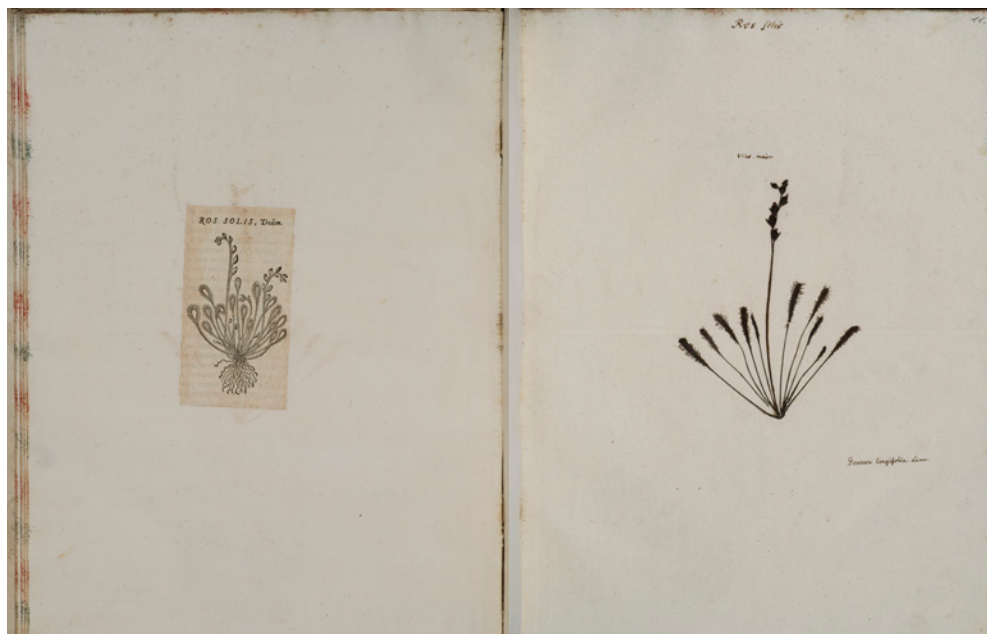


FIGURE 8.4 Felix Platter, *Herbarium* (1552–1614) vol. 8, 42/43, ca. 41 × 31 cm. Bern, Burgerbibliothek (BBB ES 70.8). Left: Jacques Daléchamps, “Ros Solis”, cut-out woodcut. Right: “Ros Solis”, dried plant on paper.

IMAGE © BURGERBIBLIOTHEK BERN.

cuts, 288 are smaller sized images cut out from herbals by Mathieu de Lobel, Pietro Andrea Matthioli, Jacques Daléchamps, and Clusius. The majority of woodcuts came, in nearly equal proportions, from Leonhard Fuchs's *De historia stirpium commentarii insignes* (*Remarkable Commentaries on the History of Plants*) and from a set of images that were probably test runs for the revised edition of the book, which was interrupted by Fuchs's death in 1566 and never published.⁵⁶ How Platter acquired these images is unknown. But as a keen collector of curious things he would have been aware of such desirable images becoming available. Since the first edition of the *historia stirpium* had been published in Basel, it is possible that the second edition was being prepared there again and that the test run for the images had remained with the printer, from whom Platter might later have acquired them. The pages with the Fuchs woodcuts are strikingly different from the others [Fig. 8.5]. The plants are far

56 Fuchs Leonhard, *De historia stirpium commentarii insignes* (Basel, Isengrin: 1542); Rytz *Herbarium Felix Platters* 60–61.



FIGURE 8.5 *Felix Platter, Herbarium (1552–1614) vol. 3, 190/191, ca. 41 × 31 cm. Bern, Burgerbibliothek (BBB ES 70.3). Left: Leonhard Fuchs, *Lepidium/Pfefferkraut*, cut-out coloured woodcut. Right: “*Lepidium/Pfefferkraut*”, dried plant on paper. IMAGE © BURGERBIBLIOTHEK BERN.*

larger and more detailed, and are thus comparable to the pressed specimens. This similarity in size and details is also evident on those pages where a watercolour faces a plant [Fig. 8.6]. All the watercolours in the herbarium are of striking quality and naturalism. Hans Weiditz, a renowned artist from Strasbourg, executed 77 out of the 141 watercolours in total.⁵⁷ These images were initially produced at the behest of the publisher Johann Schott for the publication of a new herbal, for which the naturalist Otto Brunfels provided the text after the production of the image.⁵⁸ Again, it is unknown how and from whom Platter acquired these images. As both sides of the page had been used by the artist to paint different plants, Platter cut them out by following the outlines as

57 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 76–80.

58 Kusukawa S., *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago, IL – London: 2011), 19; Brunfels Otto, *Herbarum vivae eicones ad naturam imitationem* (Strasburg, Johann Schott: 1530).



FIGURE 8.6 Felix Platter, *Herbarium* (1552–1614) vol. 3, 238/239, ca. 41 × 31 cm. Bern, Burgerbibliothek (BBB ES 70.3). Left: Heinz Weiditz, “*Cardamine/Flos cuculi*”, cut-out watercolour on paper. Right: “*Cardamine alter/Nasturtium pratense/Sisymbrium Cardamine alter*”, dried plant on paper.

IMAGE © BURGERBIBLIOTHEK BERN.

closely as possible, so as to be able to paste both pictures into his herbarium. In some cases, elements of the plant that had to be cut away in favour of the plant on the other side were painted in afterwards.⁵⁹ Clearly, Platter valued these watercolours highly and wanted to include as many as possible in his book. The remaining 64 watercolours were executed by three different artists directly onto the sheets of paper.⁶⁰ This leads to the conclusion that the images were commissioned expressly for the herbarium, probably locally, and painted directly onto the paper in a prescribed order. Felix Platter had very good connections to local artists. Not only did he commission the illustrations for the herbarium, he also had items from his collection painted, collected paintings, and had his portrait painted.⁶¹ He also served as an agent for many of his

59 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 94–95.

60 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 74–76.

61 Landolt, “*Sammler und Kunstfreund*”.

aristocratic Alsatian patients, procuring all sorts of objects for their collections and commissioning works of art on their behalf, or checking up on the progress of previous orders.⁶² He thus was not only a consumer of art, but also a knowledgeable intermediary to the 'artistic marketplace' in Basel.

The juxtaposition of an image with a plant was the primary mode of organization for the volumes, to the point that pages were left empty when either the pressed plant or the image for a particular species was unavailable.⁶³ This is reflected in the inventory that Felix's half-brother Thomas compiled of the collection after his brother's death, describing the herbarium as a 'Herbal of living plants containing on the one side the living, on the other the illuminated herbs'.⁶⁴ The numbers of images cited above show that Platter preferred to use either watercolours or the woodcuts drawn from Leonhard Fuchs, whose images are similar in size and degree of detail and thus much closer in overall appearance to the pressed plants than the much smaller images cut from other printed herbals.

Weiditz's watercolours contributed to establishing the tradition of images painted 'ad vivum'. This new trend of naturalistic painting in fact entered botanical illustration via his images for Otto Brunfels's *Herbarum vivae eicones* (*Live Images of Plants*, 1530), whose title already contains a mimetic promise of a new engagement with nature.⁶⁵ By confronting 'real' dried plants and 'ad vivum' watercolours Platter seems to be commenting on the specific qualities of the different ways of gaining knowledge about plants through visual evidence. His interest in the visual specificity of different reproduction techniques is further evident in his esteem for the Fuchs woodcuts: While these were also done 'ad naturam' (and Fuchs indeed tightly controlled the production of the images), he developed a different approach. Contrary to his predecessors, he insisted that every plant description be accompanied by an accurate and unique pictorial representation—each picture was to appear in the herbal only once. What is more, the images were to show all stages of a plant's growth,

62 Landolt, "Sammler und Kunstfreund" 264–268.

63 See, for example, Platter Felix, *Herbarium* (1554–1614) vol. 3, 187.

64 'Item i Lebendig Kreüterbuch auf der einen seiten die lebendigen auf der anderen die Illuminierten Kreüter in 18 Tomis'. Platter Thomas, *Hauptbuch*, fol. 507, Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, Mscr. A λ V 9.

65 Swan C., "Ad vivum, naer het leven, From the Life: Defining a Mode of Representation", *Word & Image* 11 (1995) 353–372, at 354 and 362.

avoiding unnecessary shading and individual imperfections.⁶⁶ According to Sachiko Kusukawa, the pictures 'appear as timeless and divorced from any specific location, in the manner of an *Idealbild*'.⁶⁷ Much as Caspar Bauhin's parallel teaching of the inspection of natural and dried specimens created a mnemonic link between the permanent herbarium specimen and the transient plant, the juxtaposition of pressed plant, watercolour, woodcut, and written caption creates a specific and significant knowledge in Platter's herbarium. In fact, much like the image collections assembled by Ulisse Aldrovandi or Thomas Moffet, the images and plants collected in the herbarium not only made nature intelligible to Felix Platter and others who looked at the books but also highlighted the artistic ways of dealing with its representations.⁶⁸

Thus Felix Platter did not simply cut up and reassemble the images in his herbarium. He also manipulated and adapted the dried specimens. The interventions Platter undertook seem to have had two aims: to make his specimens more legible, and to render them 'curious'.⁶⁹ He had introduced tulips into his garden very early on and included several specimens in his herbarium. Incidentally, the accompanying watercolours are some of the most beautiful in the collection. Platter used different techniques to assemble his dried specimens. In several instances, the artifice invested in their making becomes particularly visible. Because the structure of the tulip bloom would have been lost had the plant been pressed directly after collection, Platter separated the blooms and the stamens from the stem and pressed them individually, so that he could reassemble the plant on paper in a way that—to him—matched the living plant better or allowed one to see more detail. In fact, in one instance he glued the stamens in the wrong way up [Fig. 8.7].⁷⁰ This lapse was probably due to the relative newness of tulips in Europe and in Platter's garden at the time. But as the stamens are not visible in the images of the tulips,

66 Niekrasz C. – Swan C., "Art", in Park – Daston, *Early Modern Science* 773–796, at 780.

67 Kusukawa S., "The Uses of Pictures in the Formation of Learned Knowledge: The Cases of Leonhard Fuchs and Andreas Vesalius", in Kusukawa S. – Maclean I., (eds.), *Transmitting Knowledge: Words, Images, and Instruments in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford – New York, NY: 2006) 73–96, at 80.

68 Neri J., *The Insect and the Image: Visualizing Nature in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700* (Minneapolis, MN: 2011) 28.

69 See Crane S.A., "Curious Cabinets and Imaginary Museums", in Crane S.A. (ed.), *Museums and Memory* (Stanford, CA: 2000) 60–80 and Findlen P., *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, CA: 1994).

70 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 138.



FIGURE 8.7 Felix Platter, *Herbarium* (1552–1614) vol. 2, 114/115, ca. 41 × 31 cm. Bern, Burgerbibliothek (BBB ES 70.2). Left: Jacques Daléchamps, “*Tulipa sive Lilionarcissus luteus latifolius*” and Carolus Clusius, “*Tulipa praecox purpurea*”, cut-out coloured woodcuts. Right: “*Tulip*”, dried plant on paper.

IMAGE © BURGERBIBLIOTHEK BERN.

in this case, Platter's cutting technique provides more detail than the image. A further example of virtuoso artistic manipulation of natural materials is the sunflower, another exotic plant that had only recently been introduced to Europe. Because of the thickness of its centre, the sunflower cannot be efficiently pressed. However, its newness made it a very desirable plant to include in the herbarium and Platter demonstrated considerable ingenuity by pressing the blooms individually and then reassembling them in concentric circles that give a very close approximation of the living plant [Fig. 8.8]. The pressed rampion bellflowers presented Platter with a different challenge. Once dried, the vibrant blue flowers lose their colour and turn a faded yellow. Delphinium flowers, on the other hand, keep their blue colour very well and Platter cannily cut new blooms for his bellflowers out of them [Fig. 8.9]. He left only one of the original—now yellow—flowers, replacing all the others with blooms from delphiniums, which remain a vibrant, purple blue even after more than 400 years. In this bit of botanical legerdemain, more than in the other cases of manipulation, Platter displayed his expertise and craft. The replacement is almost perfect.



FIGURE 8.8 *Felix Platter, Herbarium (1552–1614) vol. 6, 154/155, ca. 41 × 31 cm. Bern, Burgerbibliothek (BBB ES 70.6). Left: Pietro Andrea Matthioli (?) “Sunflower”, Indian ink on paper. Right: “Flos solis maximus”, dried plant on paper.*

IMAGE © BURGERBIBLIOTHEK BERN.

Even with today's technical means, the artificiality of the blue flowers can hardly be detected, and only their slightly square and pointy appearance hints at the scissors or knife used on them. This specimen thus oscillates between two different epistemological regimes. One part of the specimen, the yellow flower, loses its natural characteristic, but remains 'natural'. The other part, the blue flowers, preserves its natural characteristic, its blue colour, by artificial means. The switch demonstrates the creator's mastery of the art of the herbarium and his knowledge of plants: He knew exactly which pressed flowers would keep their colour and most closely match the faded rampion bellflowers that were to be replaced. Indeed, only the fact that one flower is a different colour urges the eye to stop and look more closely. It is the recognition of the manipulation that adds a further layer to the pleasure of viewing the specimens.⁷¹ Much like Joris Hoefnagel's realistic imaginary images of insects, Platter's manipulations are reminders

⁷¹ Neri, *Insect and Image* 22.



FIGURE 8.9 *Felix Platter, Herbarium (1552–1614) vol. 3, 90/91, ca. 41 × 31 cm. Bern, Burgerbibliothek (BBB ES 70.3). Left: Leonhard Fuchs, “Campanula/Halskraut”, cut-out coloured woodcut. Right: “Campanula folio urticae/Cervicaria/Trachelium”, dried plant on paper.*

IMAGE © BURGERBIBLIOTHEK BERN.

that viewers cannot trust their eyes but rather that knowledge based on vision must always be probed and questioned, and that images do not simply function as transparent conduits of observations of nature, but are active participants in the construction of a particular vision of the natural world.⁷²

Platter's manipulation and assemblage of nature was a testament to his construction of a botanical world. He demonstrated his knowledge of plants both theoretically and practically by sorting them according to the newest system of classification and through his ability to make the plants more legible by dismembering and reassembling them. He showed off his craftsmanship with knives or scissors and his excellent connections with printers and artists, which allowed him to obtain highly-prized images. In short, he made his position in

⁷² Neri, *Insect and Image* 20.

scholarly, artistic, and noble circles visible with one visual object that, through its bound and therefore fixed form, endured both physically as an object and as a visual manifestation of its author and his self-fashioning.

Afterlife: Focusing on Past and Present

This chapter has used two herbaria to bring into focus three aspects of the practice of natural history in Basel at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. It has shown how the herbaria functioned as tools for botanical study, but also for teaching and learning in an academic setting and for practicing natural history locally, but with many links and references to very international networks and audiences. Platter and Bauhin used different means to participate in the scholarly discourse of their time. Bauhin by contributing to efforts at plant classification, Platter by assembling and manipulating plants, thus creating new and curious objects, and by collecting images following the latest trends of botanical illustration.

After Platter's death some parts of the collection, such as the coins and medals, were sold; the herbarium, though, along with the other *naturalia*, remained in the family of Felix's half-brother and continued to be shown to visitors. An account of a visit to Switzerland published in 1654 describes the Platter collection as housed in two rooms and comprising thousands of objects. Besides Amerbach's cabinet, which this account briefly mentions as well, Platter's was the only widely known collection to be seen in Basel.⁷³ When the French doctor Balthasar de Montconys visited it in 1664, he wanted to buy some images of animals that had reputedly been drawn by Hans Holbein the Younger himself. Felix Platter's nephew, Felix II, was more than willing to sell, but only on the condition that Montconys also purchase the 18 volumes of the herbarium. The two men could not reach an agreement because Montconys was only interested in individual images, not the whole collection.

In the end, the herbarium outlived the last Platter descendant after whose death in the mid-eighteenth century the collection was sold to different buyers.⁷⁴ With the extinction of the Platter family in Basel the herbarium definitely lost its representational function which had once allowed its creator to claim authority as a scholar and collector among other scholars or cognoscenti in the republic of letters, but also in local and interregional circles of

73 Landolt, "Sammler und Kunstfreund" 245 and 251.

74 Landolt, "Sammler und Kunstfreund" 256 and 260.

elite citizens and noblemen. The next known owner of the herbarium was Johann Gessner, a Zurich canon who planned to publish a book on plants. After Gessner's death, the herbarium and an unknown number of volumes containing images came into the possession of an antiquarian in Zurich who gave nine volumes to a colleague in Bern to redeem a debt.⁷⁵ Whether the nine volumes were all that remained of the original 49 volumes containing both the herbarium and the collection of plant images, or whether the nine volumes were judged to correspond in value to the debt, is unknown. They were purchased in 1812 by Jakob Samuel Wytenbach, a pastor and naturalist from Bern, who likely willed it to the Museum of Natural History in Bern together with his own herbarium. The herbarium was subsequently forgotten, and only rediscovered by the botanist Walther Rytz in 1930.⁷⁶ Although only a small part of Platter's herbarium survives, it retains its integrity due to its cohesion as a collection and as an object. Caspar Bauhin's specimens suffered a rather different fate. The approximately 4000 plants were kept by his descendants, who offered access to interested botanists. In this way, Bauhin's herbarium continued to serve as both an instrument of learning and a tool of reference. The loose form of the herbarium made the extraction of specimens very easy. Among many others, the famous botanist Albrecht von Haller made his selection in 1728.

The Bauhin specimens can still be recognised in his herbarium. The depredations were such that by 1763, two thirds of the original specimens had been removed. In 1774, the remaining specimens were bought by the botanist Werner von Lachenal, who further disordered them by integrating them into his herbaria of Swiss and exotic plants. His interleaved and amply annotated copy of Bauhin's *Catalogus* proves that he used other parts of Bauhin's work to further his own botanical studies as well [Fig. 8.2]. By von Lachenal's time, the Linnean ideal of not binding herbarium specimens had become dominant, and the loose form that Bauhin had chosen for his specimens facilitated their integration into another collection. Conversely, when the University of Basel acquired von Lachenal's collection in 1830, it was comparatively easy to extract Bauhin's specimens again. In 1902, they were then sorted according to the modern system, while 400 specimens in poor condition were thrown out.⁷⁷ The herbarium is now owned and cared for by the Botanical Institute of the University. In contrast to Platter's herbarium, which had become an instrument of its maker's

75 These included eight volumes of the herbarium and one of images, Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 4.

76 Rytz, *Herbarium Felix Platters* 3, 9.

77 Selosse, "Richesse linguistique" 195.

self-representation, Bauhin's herbarium remained an instrument of botanical study. His system was widely used and discussed; his student Joachim Burser assembled his herbarium according to Bauhin's *Pinax*, and it was Burser's herbarium that Carl Linnaeus in turn used to identify the plants described in the older literature while he worked on his system of classification.⁷⁸ The flexible format allowed the continued use and integration of the specimens into new contexts, collections, and systems of classification. These transformations suggest that Bauhin's herbarium acquired aspects of a laboratory within which patterns of systematization could be tested and developed, and in fact became a kind of epistemological laboratory. But the movability of the specimens also meant the dispersal of large parts of the herbarium. As it was not as closely tied to its author in form and format as Platter's herbarium, it was nearly completely dispersed. Nevertheless, as an epistemological system, it proved longer lasting than Platter's herbarium, a showpiece in a collection and an element in a system of representation. Thus, even though both herbaria survive in diminished form, they remain powerfully eloquent objects depending on the questions asked of them.

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Translation, Mobility, and Mediation: The Case of the *Codex Mendoza**

Daniela Bleichmar

Historians of the early modern world (ca. 1450–1800) have characterized the period as the first truly global moment in history, a time when cultures and peoples encountered one another in unprecedented ways: more often, at a greater scale, across larger distances, and more deeply and irrevocably than ever before. Histories became inextricably ‘connected’.¹ For Europeans, the world grew both in breadth and depth: while explorations, new trade routes, and the circulation of people and things expanded the globe geographically, the humanist rediscovery of classical antiquity and the investigation of the past through its textual and physical remains expanded a sense of time and history.² The intertwined interests in the far away and the long ago often took visual and material forms. Images circulated widely, in part due to the spread of print as an artistic and commercial product. Objects—the ‘worldly goods’ that populated the marketplace as well as the more intimate realm of the collection—allowed people to encounter and possess distant worlds while making claims about their own status.³ But the growing interest in distant places and cultures was also linked to economic, political, and religious agendas that often had dramatic repercussions for non-European peoples.

* I am grateful to Christine Göttler, Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, Maike Christadler, and the members of the ‘Sites of Mediation’ project at the University of Bern and University of Basel for their thoughtful feedback on this essay.

1 Sanjay Subrahmanyam coined the phrase ‘connected histories’ in a seminal article, Subrahmanyam S., “Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia”, *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997) 735–762, and has continued to develop it in numerous publications.

2 Grafton A., *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: 1992).

3 The literature on the early modern material turn and the role of collections is vast. On cross-cultural aspects in particular see, among others, Bleichmar D. – Mancall P.C. (eds.), *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, PA: 2011) and Bleichmar D. – Martin M. (eds.), *Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World*, special issue of *Art History* 38 (2015).

Given the complex flows and frictions involved in early modern encounters and connections, the idea of 'sites of mediation' emerges as a crucial category for the historical analysis of the period as it focuses our attention on both the *locations* and the *processes* at work, suggesting the need to consider them in tandem. This essay pursues this two-pronged approach by exploring the interconnected functions of manuscripts as privileged sites and of translation as a central technique of mediation for cross-cultural production in the early modern period. It does so through an analysis of the making, circulation, and interpretation of a manuscript known as the *Codex Mendoza*. Created in Mexico City around 1542, the *Codex Mendoza* circulated physically from place to place for the next eight decades, and then on paper through reproduction for another two centuries.⁴ Examining it through the lens of translation highlights some of the complex phenomena encompassed by the term 'mediation': the act of bridging or bringing together two separate regions, positions, or realms; the notion of negotiation or arbitration in an attempt at resolving differences in a contested situation; as well as mediation in terms of the material movement between media or registers, such as from an oral to a written register, manuscript to print, or image to word. The essay also suggests that the page constituted one of the most frequent, lively, and versatile sites of mediation for encountering peoples, objects, and knowledges in the early modern world, in Europe as well as in other parts of the world that engaged with Europe through paper. From lavish illustrated atlases to cheap broadsheets, from travel narratives to inventories and letters, across genres and media, in print or manuscript, through text and image, paper pages connected the early modern world.

Translation as Mediation

Mesoamerican cultures like the Nahua, Mixtec, and Maya possessed sophisticated traditions of pictorial writing, which they used to produce records with multiple functions—historical, calendrical, divinatory, and so forth. In Central Mexico, indigenous 'painter-scribes' (Nahuatl *tlacuilo*, pl. *tlacuiloque*) created such documents by using paint on cloth, treated deerskin, or *amatl* bark paper. These manuscripts existed in three main formats: screenfolds composed of multiple glued square pages that would open and close in the manner of an accordion, cloths (*lienzos*), and rolls. Thus, while Latin Americanists today use

4 For more on the mobility of this codex, and the connection between mobility and translation, see Bleichmar D., "History in Pictures: Translating the *Codex Mendoza*", *Art History* 38 (2015) 682–701.

the term ‘codex’ to refer to indigenous manuscripts, pre-Columbian Mexican books did not in fact use the European book format, nor was the term in wide use in the early modern period.⁵

After the Spanish arrived in Mexico, these ‘painted books’ fascinated Europeans on both sides of the Atlantic. But, while collectors in the Old World valued them as rare examples of exotic writing, early missionaries in New Spain destroyed the vast majority of pre-Columbian pictorial manuscripts because of their ‘idolatrous’—in other words, sacred or ritual—content. Nevertheless, painter-scribes continued to make codices after the conquest, adapting their craft and incorporating both native and European traditions.

This is the case with the pictorial manuscript we know as the *Codex Mendoza*, created in Mexico City around 1542 [Figs. 9.1, 9.2].⁶ To make it, indigenous artists painted colorful figures that recorded information about Aztec history, tributary practices, and social life.⁷ Some of the drawings adhere to

5 Latin Americanists use the word ‘codex’ for any work connected to Amerindian traditions of pictorial writing and understood to have involved indigenous makers, regardless of its format, support, date, the absence or presence of European elements, or use of alphabetic text—it is the indigenous referent that is crucial. The foundational English-language publication on Mesoamerican pictorial documents in the colonial period is Robertson D., *Mexican Manuscript Painting of the Early Colonial Period: The Metropolitan Schools* (Norman, OK: 1994). Also indispensable are the works of Elizabeth Hill Boone, among them Boone E.H., *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin, TX: 2000); Boone E.H. – Mignolo W. (eds.), *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham, NC: 1994); Boone E.H. – Cummins T.B.F. (eds.), *Native Traditions in the Post-Conquest World* (Washington, DC: 1998); and Boone E.H. (ed.), *Painted Books and Indigenous Knowledge in Mesoamerica: Manuscript Studies in Honor of Mary Elizabeth Smith* (New Orleans, LA: 2005). In this essay I use the terms ‘Aztec’ and ‘Mexica’ interchangeably.

6 The standard source is the magnificent edition Berdan F. – Anawalt P.R. (eds.), *The Codex Mendoza*, 4 vols. (Berkeley, CA: 1992). See also Gómez-Tejada J., *Making the Codex Mendoza, Constructing the Codex Mendoza: A Reconsideration of a Sixteenth-Century Mexican Manuscript*, Ph.D. dissertation (Yale University: 2012). As of January 2015, an online scholarly edition is available at <http://codicemendoza.inah.gob.mx/index.php?lang=english> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

7 The codex does not address the number or ethnicity of the painters and scribes, though scholars have assumed on stylistic grounds that the artists were indigenous. Based on meticulous formal analysis, Gómez-Tejada suggests that two artists worked on the images, see Gómez-Tejada, *Making the Codex Mendoza*, chapter 2. Scholarly speculation about the possible identity of artists and scribes is discussed in Nicholson H.B., “The History of the *Codex Mendoza*”, in Berdan – Anawalt, *The Codex Mendoza* vol. 1, 1–2 and Gómez-Tejada, *Making the Codex Mendoza* 37–39.

pre-Hispanic pictorial conventions, while others show their Europeanization.⁸ Following indigenous custom, these figures provided the basis for an oral account in Nahuatl, speech that an interpreter then rendered into spoken Spanish. In a final step, scribes set down this narrative as a Spanish-language text. Thus, this codex emerged from a complex and multi-step process that engaged American and European makers and traditions. Amerindian aspects include the pictographic writing and oral account, the artists and interpreter, some of the pigments used in the figures, and the information the document contains. European aspects include the paper, ink, and some pigments; the book format and adherence to pages as the narrative unit, rather than the pre-Columbian screenfold, scroll, or cloth; the alphabetic writing; the scribes; and the intended audience, as it was made for export to Spain.

From its arrival in Europe in the sixteenth century, this codex has been celebrated as a key document for the study of Mesoamerica, receiving more sustained attention than any other Mexican manuscript, particularly in the early modern period. Authors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries referred to it as 'a Mexican picture historie', 'Mexican hieroglyphs', and 'Mexican painted annals'.⁹ In 1780, the Mexican Jesuit Francisco Javier Clavijero, writing in exile in Italy, suggested that the first viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza (1495–1552), commissioned the codex. Although that provenance is uncertain at best, it has since that moment provided a name for the document.¹⁰ Today, scholars cherish the *Codex Mendoza* for the detailed information it provides about Nahua history, economy, and culture a mere two decades after the conquest of the Aztec Empire in 1521. It is also of remarkable artistic quality and historical importance. Finally, the document is unique in providing an alphabetic gloss to every single pictograph, which has positioned it as a sort of 'Rosetta Stone' or primer for the study of Nahua glyphs—both in the early modern period and more recently. The Bodleian Library at Oxford, which owns it, exhibits it as a 'treasure'.

Scholarship on the *Codex Mendoza* has tended to focus on interpreting the pictographs, mining the document for empirical data about Aztec society, and

8 On style, see Howe K.S., "The Relationship of Indigenous and European Styles in the *Codex Mendoza*: An Analysis of Pictorial Style", in Berdan – Anawalt, *The Codex Mendoza* vol. 1, 25–33 and Gómez-Tejada, *Making the Codex Mendoza*, chapters 1 and 2.

9 These phrases were used by the authors of the publications listed in Table 9.1.

10 Clavijero described it as 'la raccolta de Mendoza' (Mendoza's collection) in Clavijero F.S., *Storia antica del Messico*, 4 vols. (Cesena, Gregorio Biasini: 1780–1781) vol. 1, 22. The connection is questioned by Nicholson, "The History of the *Codex Mendoza*" 1–5, and Gómez-Tejada, *Making the Codex Mendoza*.

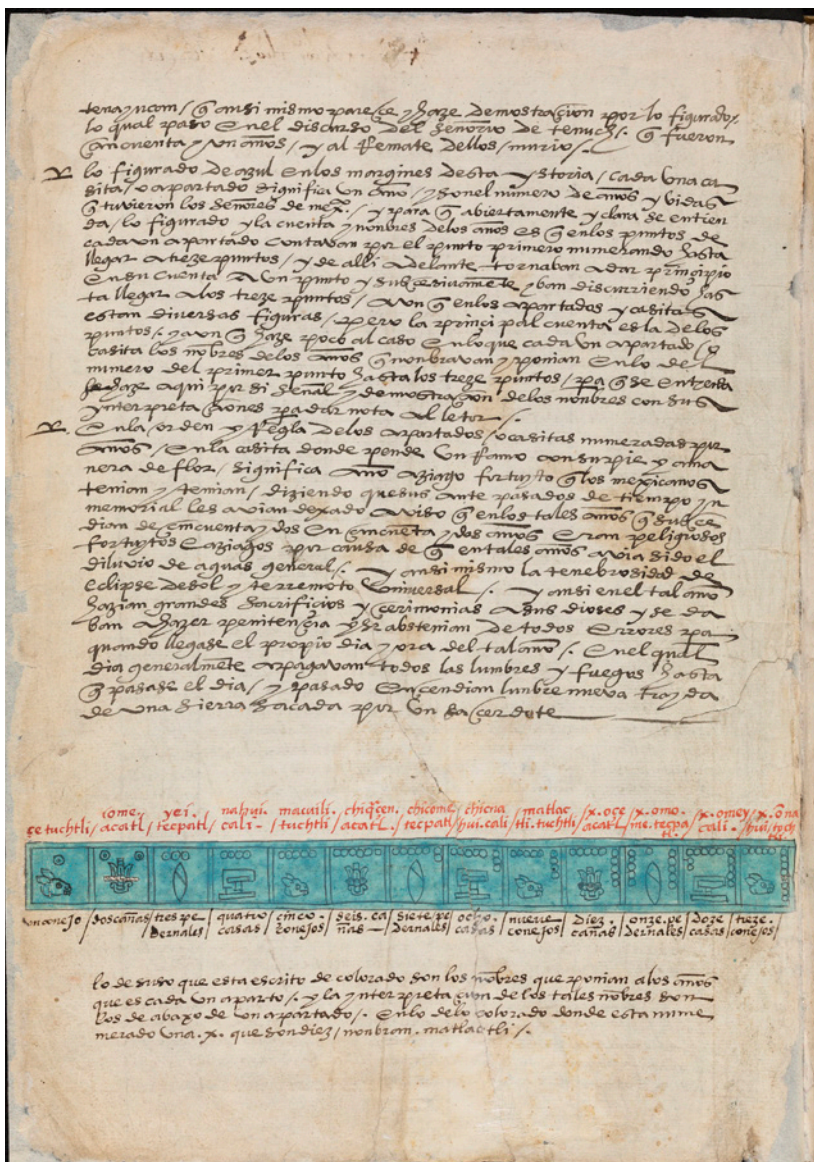


FIGURE 9.1 Codex Mendoza, Mexico City, ca. 1542, fol. 17. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS. Arch. Selden A. 1).

IMAGE © THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.



FIGURE 9.2 Codex Mendoza, Mexico City, ca. 1542, fol. 2r. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (ms. Arch. Selden A. 1).

IMAGE © THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

using it as evidence of indigenous practices and agency. This essay contributes to the scholarship by analyzing the *Mendoza's* trajectories and transformations through a focus on translation. Scholarship on early Spanish American visual and material culture has tended to parse indigenous and European elements, describing works that show traits from both traditions as examples of a unique 'hybrid' or 'mestizo' mixture characteristic of the region.¹¹ However, although the *Codex Mendoza* presents both European and American elements, its makers for the most part did not combine them. Quite to the contrary, the codex carefully juxtaposes image and text, Nahua and Spanish elements, presenting them as related but separate and distinct. It is less an example of hybridization or *mestizaje* than an instance of translation, suggesting the constant movement, adjustments, and transformations—in short, mediations—involved in negotiating differences between languages, writing systems, and cultures.¹²

The *Codex Mendoza* was created at a time when practices of linguistic and cultural translation were critical to almost every aspect of public and private life in New Spain. Post-conquest codices often display the figure of the interpreter in a prominent position, featuring in particular the best known and most infamous of colonial go-betweens: Cortés's aide and lover Malintzin—who both translated for the Spaniards and underwent translation herself, as she was also known as Malinche, the Hispanized version of her Nahua name, and as Doña Marina, her baptismal name.¹³ Early missionaries faced the challenges posed by linguistic barriers by learning indigenous languages and creating a copious literature that included dictionaries, grammars, catechisms, collections of sermons, and *confesionarios*. The first printed Spanish-Nahuatl dictionary, *Vocabulario en la lengua castellana y Mexicana* (*Vocabulary in the Castillian and Mexican languages*) by the Franciscan Alonso de Molina, offered an impressive 520 pages of paired entries; it was widely used and repeatedly emulated and expanded upon.¹⁴ The Franciscans also undertook

11 Among the vast literature on this issue, see especially Dean C. – Leibsohn D., "Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America", *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (2003) 5–35 and Gruzinski S., *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York, NY: 2002).

12 On early colonial Mexican art and translation, see Russo A., *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500–1600* (Austin, TX: 2014).

13 She is prominently depicted as an interpreter in the *Relación de Tlaxcala*, the *Codex Durán*, and the *Florentine Codex*, among others. See Karttunen F., "Rethinking Malinche", in Schroeder S. – Wood S. – Haskett R.S. (eds.), *Indian Women of Early Mexico* (Oklahoma City, OK: 1997) 291–312.

14 Molina Alonso de, *Vocabulario en la lengua castellana y Mexicana* (rev. ed. Mexico City: 1571; 1st ed. Mexico City: 1555).

the education of elite Nahua boys at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, inaugurated in 1536, where they provided a humanistic and religious education in Spanish and Latin.¹⁵ The college's library, whose collection of printed books provided models of European texts and images, is linked to two important colonial codices that are roughly contemporary with the *Mendoza*: the *Codex de la Cruz-Badiano* or *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis* (*Little Book of the Medicinal Herbs of the Indies*, 1552, in Latin and Nahuatl) and the *Florentine Codex* (ca. 1555–1577, in Nahuatl and Spanish). To live in Mexico City in the mid-sixteenth century meant to constantly engage in acts of linguistic and cultural translation. Multilingualism was a central tool for mediation.

It is important to note that, in the early modern period, the word 'translation' had two meanings, both of which relate to mediation. Sebastián de Covarrubias's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (*Treasure of the Castilian or Spanish language*), the first dictionary of any European vernacular, defines *traduzir* (to translate) as 'to take one thing from one place to another' and 'to turn a statement from one language into another'.¹⁶ Translation could refer to physical or linguistic movement, making the concept particularly well suited to the *Codex Mendoza*, a document produced through processes of linguistic and cultural translation, set in physical motion across space, and then repeatedly transformed in printed versions that constituted new acts of interpretive translation. This essay's sections follow the codex through these three types of translation and mediation.

Colonial Translation and the Making of the *Codex Mendoza*

The *Codex Mendoza* is an illustrated manuscript in book format, composed of seventy-one folios of European paper measuring roughly 30 × 21 cm. It consists of seventy-two pages of pictorial content annotated with Spanish glosses and sixty-three pages of textual commentary in Spanish, with pages of text and image interpolated [Figs. 9.1, 9.2]. The codex is divided into three sections. The first, in sixteen folios (fols. 1r–18r), presents a history of the Aztecs from the founding of the capital city of Tenochtitlan in 1325 to its fall in 1521.

15 The classic work on the early Franciscans is Ricard R., *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, trans. L.B. Simpson (Berkeley, CA: 1966), originally published in French in 1933.

16 'Llevar de un lugar a otro alguna cosa, o encaminarla [...] el bolver la sentencia de una lengua en otra', see Covarrubias Sebastián de, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid, Luis Sanchez: 1611) unpaginated.

This is a political and military history organized chronologically according to the reign of each emperor or *tlatoani*, providing the dates of his rule through blue-coloured year glyphs and the names of the towns he brought into the imperial fold as tributaries [Fig. 9.3].

The second and longest section, in thirty-nine folios (fols. 18v–56r), relates Aztec imperial geography to economics. It details the tributary obligations of subject towns in the sixteenth century, organized by region and specifying such items as fine feathers, animal skins, precious stones, gold, mantles, liquidambar, and cacao beans, among others [Fig. 9.4]. As in the first section, the content, format, and style are highly regimented. Towns are listed on the margin, starting at the top left and moving counterclockwise around the page. Tribute items occupy the majority of the page, accompanied by glyphs indicating quantities and organized in horizontal registers, with clothing always at the top of the page, military insignia such as warrior's uniforms and shields at the center, and foodstuffs and other items at the bottom.

Whereas the first two sections follow pre-Columbian traditions, the third represents a colonial innovation—there is nothing like it before.¹⁷ In sixteen folios (fols. 56v–71v), it describes Aztec social life: the upbringing of boys and girls from birth until age fifteen, when girls should be married and boys enter a trade or specialized schooling; various occupations, including detailed depictions of military orders and their uniforms; information about governance; and depictions of old age and death [Fig. 9.5]. This section provides a unique glimpse of 'their private and public rites from the grave of the womb to the womb of the grave'—to use the evocative words of a seventeenth-century commentator—just as they were being thoroughly transformed in the new viceregal society.¹⁸

Making the codex involved various steps and types of translation and mediation: from painted image to spoken word in Nahuatl, to spoken word in Spanish, to alphabetic writing in Spanish. First, indigenous artists working in the Mesoamerican tradition recorded information about Mexica history, culture, religion, and tributary practices pictorially, leaving blank pages in between their paintings. In a second step, a narrator provided an oral account

17 The second section is related to the *Matrícula de Tributos* (*Codex Moctezuma*), see Berdan F.F. – Durand-Forest J. de, *Matrícula de tributos* (*Codice de Moctezuma*), *Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico* (Cod. 35–529): *Vollständige Farbproduktion des Codex in verkleinerter Format*, *Codices Selecti Phototypice Impressi* 118 (Graz: 1980).

18 Purchas Samuel, *Hakluytus Posthumus: Or, Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 5 vols. (London, William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone: 1625–1626) vol. 3, 1066. I have modernized the original spelling throughout.



FIGURE 9.3 Codex Mendoza, Mexico City, ca. 1542, fol. 15v. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (ms. Arch. Selden A. 1).
IMAGE © THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

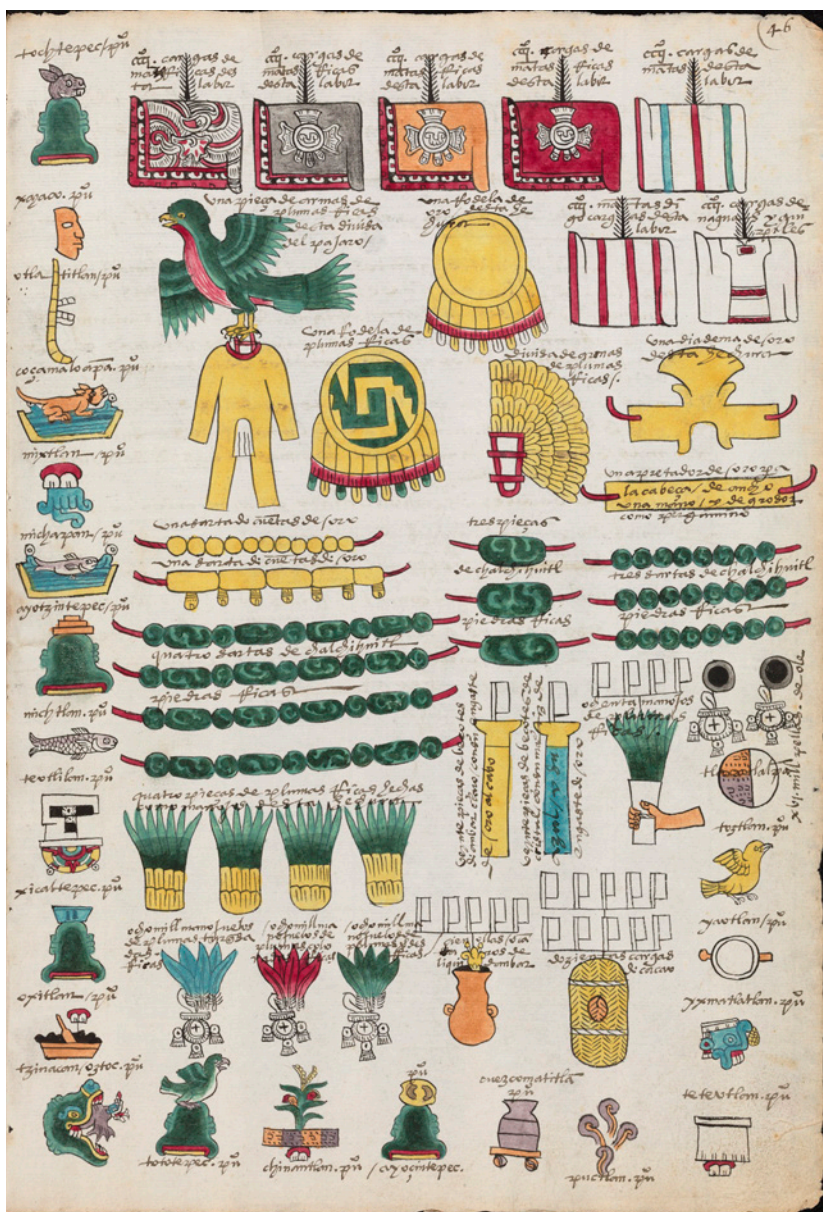


FIGURE 9.4 Codex Mendoza, Mexico City, ca. 1542, fol. 46r. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (ms. Arch. Selden A. 1).

IMAGE © THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.



FIGURE 9.5 Codex Mendoza, *Mexico City, ca. 1542, fol. 60r. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS. Arch. Selden A. 1).*

IMAGE © THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

of what the drawings represented, rendering images into spoken words, most likely in Nahuatl. Then, an interpreter turned this Nahuatl speech into spoken Spanish. In a final step, a scribe set it down in written Spanish, producing a lengthy text that translated the images on the page and also annotating every single figure with an explanatory gloss: the name of each ruler or town appears next to the appropriate figure; the banner (*pantli*) is always annotated as 'twenty', the mountain glyph representing a town as *pueblo* (town), and so on [Figs. 9.2–9.5]. Finally, the manuscript appears to have been reviewed by an additional person who corrected errors in the Spanish text and appended a concluding commentary about the document's production.

The relation between text and image is not one of primary content and secondary illustration. Rather, the text translates the image, so that they each present information according to one of two separate registers, a Mexica pictorial one and a Spanish alphabetic one. The text has a dual function: first, to translate the content itself, that is, to convey in words the information that the images present; and second, to translate the way in which the system of pictorial writing works. For instance, at the bottom of the first textual portion [Fig. 9.1] there is an explanation of a blue strip of year glyphs whose meaning is deciphered through inscriptions in both Nahuatl and Spanish, with the Nahuatl in red ink above the images and the Spanish in black ink below them.¹⁹ Throughout the codex, the text thus provides information and also an introduction to Nahua pictographic writing. There is a constant back-and-forth between these two functions throughout the codex: the Spanish writing will give a textual rendition of the content of an image, noting for instance that a ruler reigned for so many years, and then explain that the blue squares provide dates, burning temples signify conquest, and so on.

The translation is insistent, indeed, incessant. Glosses repeatedly offer the meaning of every single glyph even if they recur throughout the manuscript, or within a single folio. It is never assumed that a reader already knows that the banner stands for twenty, or that it is unnecessary to provide the individual translation for every single glyph given that the accompanying text on the facing page details every item. In effect each figure is translated twice, once next to the image and again in the textual version.

The codex also shows acts of cultural translation or interpretation, framing Mexica history and culture in the post-conquest context and for European audiences. The first section of the codex, for instance, ends with the reign

19 The use of black and red ink is highly suggestive, since the Nahua expression *in tlilli in tlapalli* ('the black ink, the red ink') refers to writing and to knowledge more broadly.

of Moctezuma Xocoyotzin [Fig. 9.3]. The choice of Moctezuma as the 'last' Aztec emperor omits his successors Cuitlahuac and Cuauhtemoc, who ruled between Moctezuma's death in late June of 1520 and the surrender of the Aztec capital to Cortés and his allies in mid-August of 1521. At the bottom of the page, the presence of uncoloured year glyphs in pen and ink indicates a telling editorial intervention. The original chronology painted by the artists (in blue squares, each representing one year) ends in 1518, but the scribe appears to have extended this year count by adding three lines to the Roman numeral xv to transform it into xviii, and by drawing three year glyphs. The penultimate glyph is annotated 'end and death of Moctezuma', and the last one is labeled '*pacificación* (pacification) and conquest of New Spain'. Thus the Spanish scribe not only rendered images into words but in this case also presented a particular account of history, showing how translation could involve revision and transformation.

Another example of cultural translation involves the celebrated depiction of the palace of Moctezuma [Fig. 9.6]. It includes, on the left, a 'Council Hall of War', and, on the right, a 'Council Hall' for the hearing of legal cases and the passing of judgment, both of them labeled. This page is well known as the only image in the codex to use a perspectival view, a Europeanized vision of Aztec rule. Equally important is the fact that both image and text describe the Aztecs as an example of a civilized people by celebrating what the narrative terms their 'order' and 'good governance' (*orden, buen gobierno, buen regimiento*). These are crucial terms, as they connoted *civitas*, a critical category for Spanish and indeed European political philosophy that would clearly communicate to a European reader that the Mexica were highly civilized people.²⁰

The codex concludes with a page of text that directly addresses translation practices.²¹ The scribe begs for the reader's leniency with 'the rough style in the interpretation of the drawings', explaining that indigenous artists provided the material to the interpreter only ten days before the ship that would take the codex to Spain was scheduled to sail. With so little time to work, the scribe explains, the translation was done 'a uso de proceso', that is, following legal conventions. This is a most interesting revelation, as it indicates that the procedure used to make this important codex—transforming Nahua pictorial writing and oral testimony into Spanish prose—came directly out of the court system, where indigenous litigants routinely presented pictorial statements

20 Kagan R., *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793* (New Haven, CT: 2000) 1–44.

21 *Codex Mendoza*, fol. 71v.

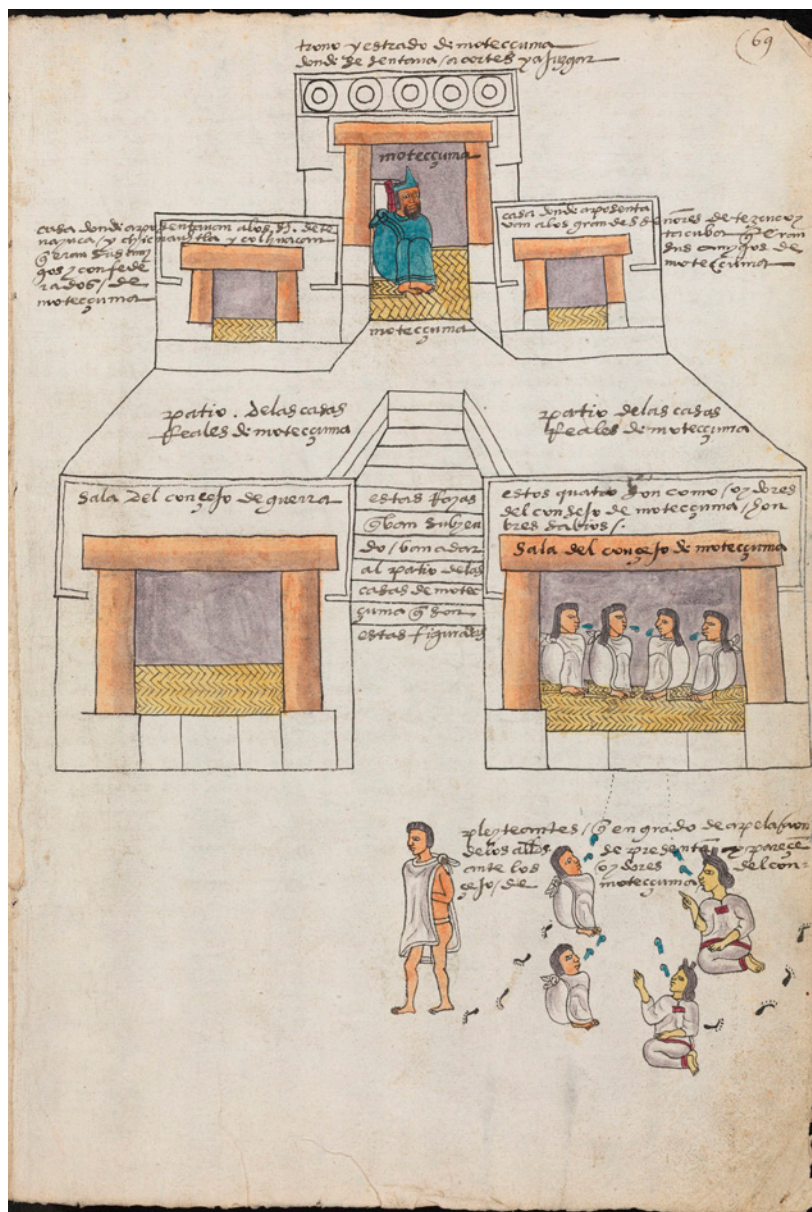


FIGURE 9.6 Codex Mendoza, Mexico City, ca. 1542, fol. 69r. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (Ms. Arch. Selden A. 1).

IMAGE © THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

as evidence.²² Thus, the codex's very last statement indicates that its makers viewed it precisely as evidence produced through translation.²³

The *Codex Mendoza*, I have suggested, is the product of a series of translations and mediations: rendering Nahuatl into Spanish, images into words, oral interpretation into alphabetic writing, as well as a hermeneutic movement in the interpretation of Mexica information for European eyes. After this, language translations gave way to physical ones. Apparently completed in haste, the codex travelled by land from Mexico City to the Gulf port of Veracruz, and there boarded a ship that carried it across the Atlantic. Once set in motion, it continued to move for the next hundred years to destinations its makers never imagined.

Physical Translations, or Travels in Space

The *Codex Mendoza* had an eventful biography, which left its physical mark on the object in the form of multiple annotations.²⁴ There is no evidence that it ever reached Spain, its intended destination. Instead, it somehow ended up in the hands of André Thevet (1516–1590), a French writer who traveled to Brazil, became an authority on the Americas, and served as royal cosmographer to the Valois court. Thevet signed the manuscript in five separate places [Fig. 9.2, top left], and briefly discussed Mexican pictographic writing in his *Cosmographie universelle* (*Universal cosmography*), and *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres* (*The true portraits and lives of famous men*).²⁵

By 1587, it appears, the codex belonged to Richard Hakluyt (ca. 1552–1616), an active promoter of English settlement in North America and the author of

22 Two early examples of codices used as evidence in legal trials are discussed by Cummins T.B.F., "From Lies to Truth: Colonial Ekphrasis and the Act of Crosscultural Translation", in Farago C. (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America, 1450–1650* (New Haven, CT: 1995) 152–174, and Herrera Meza M. del C. – Ruiz Medrano E. (eds.), *El códice de Tepeucila: El entintado mundo de la fijeza imaginaria* (Mexico City: 1997).

23 The statement calls out some mistranslations, noting that it was a mistake for the interpreter to use the Moorish words *alfaqui* (a Muslim cleric or expert in Islamic law) and *mezquitas* (mosques) instead of *sacerdote* (priest) and *templos* (temples), thus remarking on another act of translation by which New World religiosity was rendered through the vocabulary of Old World idolatry and the Christian *Reconquista* of Spain.

24 See Nicholson, "The History of the *Codex Mendoza*".

25 Thevet André, *Cosmographie universelle*, 2 vols. (Paris, Guillaume Chaudiere: 1575) and Thevet André, *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres*, 2 vols. (Paris, Guillaume Chaudiere: 1584).

two important compilations that approached geography and travel from the perspective of English political aspirations toward the New World. The date is provided by a somewhat cryptic English annotation that was written in an early blank folio in the codex.²⁶ After Hakluyt's death in 1616, the manuscript went to Samuel Purchas (ca. 1577–1626), an English cleric and the author of an immensely popular travel compilation, which, as I will discuss, was of great importance to the codex's early modern reception. After Purchas's death ten years later, John Selden (1584–1654), the English jurist, politician, Orientalist, and author, acquired the manuscript and inscribed his motto on the first folio of the text. Five years after Selden's death, in 1659, the Bodleian Library at Oxford received his extensive collection of books and manuscripts, which in addition to the *Codex Mendoza* included two other Mexican pictorial manuscripts, the *Selden Codex* and the *Selden Roll*.²⁷ This marks the end of the *Mendoza's* physical translations, with the Bodleian as its final resting place.

For about one hundred years after it was first made, the *Codex Mendoza* lived a life of constant travel. It changed hands at least five times, and was a prized possession of some of the most noted European collectors and writers about travel and the New World. These highly contingent physical translations indicate the great interest that this kind of manuscript awakened among early modern European collectors and authors, who left their mark on the codex through multiple inscriptions.

The *Codex Mendoza* was not alone in its physical translations. Over the course of the early modern period, Mexican pictorial manuscripts—pre-Columbian and colonial—could be found in collections in Madrid, Rome, Florence, Bologna, London, Oxford, Reims, Paris, and many other cities.²⁸

26 Hakluyt Richard, *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America* (London, Thomas Dawson: 1582) and Hakluyt Richard, *The Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoueries of the English Nation* (London, George Bishop – Ralph Newberrie – Robert Barker: 1589–1600). The inscription reads: 'D[ue]: yourselfe in gold rydinge to London y^e 7th of september 1587 / V^t [£5]. The exact date and means of Hakluyt's acquisition are debated in the scholarship. On Hakluyt, see Mancall P.C., *Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession for an English America* (New Haven, CT: 2007).

27 Toomer G.J., *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford: 2009) vol. 2, 793–799.

28 See Glass J.B., "A Census of the Native Middle American Pictorial Manuscripts", in Wauchope R. (ed.), *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 16 vols. (Austin, TX: 1964–1976) vol. 14/15, 81–252. Their trajectories tended to be complex and are often quite difficult to document with detail or certainty; see, for instance, Toorians L., "Some Light in the Dark Century of Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1", *Codices manuscripti* 9 (1983) 26–29 and "Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1, its History Completed", *Codices manuscripti* 10 (1984) 87–97.

European scholars were fascinated and mystified by what they termed 'Mexican hieroglyphs', which they avidly reproduced in their publications as examples of exotic non-European writing.²⁹ However, they found Mesoamerican pictorial writing impossible to decipher. The catalogue of Ferdinando Cospi's Bolognese *Wunderkammer*, published in 1667, describes the pre-Columbian *Codex Cospi* as a book of 'Mexican hieroglyphs, which are most extravagant figures and for the most part depict men and animals that are strangely monstrous'.³⁰ The publication reproduced some of these figures [Fig. 9.7], but the author had no idea what to make of them. 'What these [symbols] mean', he noted, 'I do not know, nor do I know of others in Europe who know it'. He considered these 'hieroglyphs' both fascinating and inscrutable, a 'literary mystery, not yet explained', and their eventual decipherment 'a beautiful and curious undertaking'.³¹

The inability of early modern Europeans to make sense of pre-Columbian codices, which did not include alphabetic writing, helps to explain why the *Codex Mendoza* gained such a privileged and unique place in the European study of Mesoamerica. It was the only known codex that offered a translation of both Nahua pictorial writing and Nahua history, economics, and cultural information into alphabetic glosses in Spanish, which could in turn be translated into other European languages. The final section of this essay turns to the *Codex Mendoza's* paper travels, tracking its various translations and interpretations in early modern publications.

Paper Translations, or Travels in Print

Although the *Codex Mendoza* ended its physical travels when it entered the Bodleian Library in 1659, it continued to move through publication, with physical translations giving way to media translations. Its paper travels began with the publication of Samuel Purchas's widely read *Hakluytus Posthumus: Or, Purchas his Pilgrimes*. The third volume includes a fifty-two-page chapter with woodcuts that reproduce almost the entire pictorial content of the *Mendoza*, as

29 See, for instance, Worm Ole, *Museum Wormianum* (Leiden, Iohannes Elzevier: 1655) 383–384.

30 'Contiene questo libro non altro che GEROGLIFICI del MESSICO, i quali sono figure stravagantissime, e per la Maggio parte esprimono huomini, et animali stranamente monstruosi', Legati Lorenzo, *Museo Cospiano* (Bologna, Giacomo Monti: 1677) 191.

31 'Che cosa significhino, non m'è noto, nè sò che sia noto ad altri nell'Europa [...] Sò che s'accingerebbe ad una bella, e curiosa impresa, chi prendesse ad illustrare le tenebre di questi misterii letterarii, non per anco spiegati nell'Europa', Legati, *Museo Cospiano* 192.



FIGURE 9.7 Lorenzo Legati, Museo Cospiano (Bologna, Giacomo Monti: 1677) 192. Los Angeles, CA, Getty Research Institute.

IMAGE © THE GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

well as an English translation of the Spanish text, augmented with additional commentary [Fig. 9.8].³² Purchas explained that although his book introduced the letters of other modern and ancient nations, including Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Arabic, and Persian, as well as Egyptian and Ethiopian hieroglyphs, this precious Mexican manuscript was the only known full-fledged history of and by a foreign nation, addressing their rulers, economics, religion, and customs.³³ For him, the *Codex Mendoza* represented much more than a collectible example of exotic writing: it constituted a unique indigenous source about the Aztec world. The fact that the manuscript was a history—a highly regarded genre at the time—mattered greatly to Purchas's assessment of the codex, helping to prove Aztec governance and civility and to establish the Aztecs as a sophisticated civilization rather than 'barbarians' or 'savages'.³⁴

Purchas memorably called the codex 'the choicest of my jewels', musing that 'perhaps, there is not any one History of this kind in the world comparable to this, so fully expressing so much without letters, hardly gotten, and easily lost'.³⁵ Purchas's high esteem for the manuscript is evidenced by the decision to reproduce it almost in its entirety, which involved having the Spanish text translated into English and also commissioning a large number of woodcut reproductions of the figures, a laborious and costly choice. No other document in the four volumes of the text received comparable treatment, in length or illustrations.

Purchas's version of the *Codex Mendoza* had enormous impact. Over the following two hundred years, it provided the source material for no fewer than six other titles in nine different editions, many of them influential and widely read works (*Table 9.1*). Thanks to Purchas, the *Mendoza* may well be the single most reproduced non-western manuscript in early modern publications.

32 Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus* vol. 3, 1065–1117. Purchas briefly alluded to what he called a 'Mexican historie' and 'Mexican picture historie' in an earlier publication, but did not reproduce the codex; see *Purchas his Pilgrimage, or, Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in all Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation unto this Present* [...] (2nd rev. ed. London, William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone: 1614) 803–804 and 811.

33 Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus* vol. 3, 1065.

34 On the importance of history as a genre, see Pomata G. – Siraisi N.G. (eds.), *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: 2005).

35 Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus* vol. 3, 1066, 1065.



FIGURE 9.8 Samuel Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus: Or, Purchas his Pilgrimes [...], 5 vols. (London, William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone: 1625–1626) vol. 3, 1068. San Marino, CA, The Huntington Library.

IMAGE © THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY.

TABLE 9.1 *Publications Presenting Material from the Codex Mendoza, 1625–1813*

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- 1) Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus: Or, Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 5 vols. (London, William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone: 1625–1626).
 - 2) Johannes de Laet, *Nieuwe Wereldt ofte Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (2nd ed. Leiden, Abraham Elzevier: 1630).
 - 3) Johannes de Laet, *Novus Orbis seu descriptionis Indiae Occidentalis* (Iohannes Elzevier: 1633).
 - 4) Johannes de Laet, *L'Histoire du Nouveau Monde ou description des Indes* (Leiden: Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevier: 1640).
 - 5) Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Rome, Vitale Mascardi: 1652–1654).
 - 6) Melchisédech Thévenot, *Relations des divers voyages curieux* (Paris, André Cramoisy: 1663–1696).
 - 7) William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (London, Fletcher Gyles: 1738–1741).
 - 8) William Warburton, *Essai sur les hieroglyphs des Egyptiens* (Paris, Hippolyte-Luis Guérin: 1744).
 - 9) Francisco Javier Clavijero, *Storia antica del Messico* (Cesena, Gregorio Biasini: 1780–1781).
 - 10) Alexander von Humboldt, *Vues des Cordillères, et monuments des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (Paris, J. Smith: 1810–1813).
-

Print not only gave the *Codex Mendoza* legs, it also made it enormously malleable. Authors' particular interpretations of the material and its significance created multiple versions of the codex as they used it to pursue their own interests in history, religion, pictographic writing, the civility of New World populations, the history of languages, and other topics. While a full analysis of the multiple versions of the *Mendoza* produced by the printed travels of the codex is beyond the scope of this chapter, some examples will illustrate the interpretive mobility that publication yielded.

The first print translation that the codex underwent was the initial one for Purchas's publication, which had tremendous impact as it was the only version produced from the manuscript itself until the publication of Lord Kingsborough's monumental nine-volume *Antiquities of Mexico* (London: 1830–1848).³⁶ For two centuries, the numerous authors who wrote about the

36 It is not known whether anyone consulted the original codex between Purchas and Kingsborough, who gave the *Mendoza* pride of place as the very first item in his *Antiquities*

Mendoza based their information and images on Purchas's edition, and at times on later versions based on Purchas. As a result, they encountered the work as mediated by Purchas: they knew the pictographs as black-and-white woodcuts rather than vividly coloured drawings, and could not fully access the particularities of the Spanish textual presence.

Purchas's most significant intervention was to alter the relationship between image and text in the manuscript. In Purchas's publication, the Spanish glosses that appear next to each single image in the manuscript vanished. The woodcuts replaced these annotations with uppercase letters in alphabetical order, keyed to a textual commentary set in italics below or next to the image [see Fig. 9.8]. While this was a standard mechanism for linking image to text in European publications of the time, in this particular case image became distanced from text, obscuring the Spanish presence within the manuscript itself. This separation of the pictorial and textual elements is emphasized by the running header for the chapter, in which Purchas portrays the *Mendoza* as a 'Mexican picture historie. Chronicle without writing', despite the abundant presence of words throughout the codex.³⁷ Purchas's editorial interventions yielded a new version of the manuscript, one that emphasized image over word, and the notion of a 'pure', pre-contact indigenous culture over the mixing and transformation of the colonial era. This was not a facsimile but a translation.

Indeed, Purchas was keenly aware of the centrality of translation to his work, as the title for his lengthy chapter on the codex indicates: 'The History of the Mexican Nation, described in pictures by the Mexican Author explained in the Mexican language, which exposition translated into Spanish, and thence into English, together with the said Picture-historie, are here presented'. The

of Mexico. Edward Bernard did mention it in his published catalogue of manuscripts in British collections, see Bernard E., *Catalogi librorum manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae in unum collecti, cum indice alphabetico* (Oxford, E Theatrum Sheldoniano: 1697) tom. 1, part 1, 157, item number 3134: '*Historia Mexicana Hispanice cum Figuris et Iconibus et explanatione Linguae Mexicana partim, partimque Hispanica*' (A Spanish Mexican history with figures and icons and explanations partly in the Mexican language, partly in Spanish). My thanks to Bruce Barker-Benfield for this reference.

37 This is an important intervention, given early modern European debates about the correlation between alphabetic language and civility. On the colonial role of the written word, see Boone – Mignolo, *Writing Without Words* and Mignolo W., *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor, MI: 1995) esp. parts 1 and 2.

title presents the codex as the product of multiple translations and mediations, from pictures to words, from oral narrative to written prose, and from Nahuatl to Spanish to English.

Throughout the chapter, Purchas refers often to the difficulties of translation. In one passage, he reveals that the woodcutter used a letter to label a figure for which there was no Spanish text, forcing him to provide his own tentative interpretation of what that image might mean.³⁸ Elsewhere, he appears completely at a loss as to what to make of the pictographs that provide the names of rulers and towns, not realizing that the proper name in alphabetic writing is a translation of those images—that is, that the combined glyphs of a stone (*tetl*) and a prickly-pear cactus (*nochtli*) signify the name ‘Tenoch’, much like alphabetic writing does [Fig. 9.2]. Purchas imagines that these figures must function in the manner of European arms, and leaves the task of making sense of them entirely up to the reader. ‘You see this king and every other both king and town distinguished by special arms or escutcheons, with other particulars, which here and in all the rest I leave to each reader’s own industry and search.’³⁹ But no early modern European reader, however industrious, could access Mesoamerican images if they had not been translated into written words in a European language. Even text could pose difficulties, and Purchas’s translator failed to provide English versions for some words in both Nahuatl and Spanish, leaving his readers to their own devices when faced with terms like *xicara* (a mug or cup), *copal* (a Mesoamerican aromatic tree resin), *frijoles* (beans), *huipiles* (Mesoamerican tunics) or *naguas* (*enaguas*, petticoats, surely also a translation of indigenous garb into European categories).

Later authors used Purchas’s rendering of the *Mendoza* to create new versions through processes of translation, interpretation, and selection. Johannes de Laet (1581–1649), the Dutch geographer, author, and founding member of the Dutch West India Company, drew on Purchas for the second and subsequent editions of his widely read *Nieuwe Wereldt ofte Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (*New World, or Description of the West Indies*).⁴⁰ De Laet selected portions of the manuscript for use in two chapters (out of thirty in total) in

38 Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus* vol. 3, 1070–1071, figure E on 1070.

39 Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus* vol. 3, 1071, end of the italicized textual interpretation of the figures.

40 Laet Johannes de, *Nieuwe Wereldt ofte Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (1st ed. Leiden, Isaac Elzevier: 1625; 2nd ed. Leiden, Abraham Elzevier: 1630; Latin ed. Leiden, Iohannes Elzevier: 1633; French ed. Leiden: Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevier: 1640).

the fifth book, which discusses New Spain. Chapter ten focuses on language, counting, timekeeping, and the recording of history. It begins with a vocabulary offering Nahuatl terms for parts of the human body, colours, various 'natural things', familiar relations, and numbers, along with their equivalents in a European language, reiterating the primacy of translation for the study of the New World.

Unlike Purchas's great attention to Nahua pictographs, however, De Laet privileged words over images. He noted that Aztecs lacked 'the art of writing', though they managed to record their history 'by certain pictures, which are like hieroglyphs', and as an example reproduced five small woodcuts representing dates and quantities—only five small figures, out of the hundreds in Purchas.⁴¹ Giving only a cursory glance to pictorial writing, De Laet focused instead on the information that the codex provided about Nahua dynastic history. His thirteenth chapter addressed 'The succession of Mexican kings, according to their painted annals'.⁴² Here, De Laet carefully compared the text and images in Purchas's *Mendoza*, noting discrepancies among them. He then contrasted the chronology of rulers offered by the 'painted annals' with those offered in two important publications by Spanish authors, Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias* (*General history of the Indies*) and José de Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (*Natural and moral history of the Indies*).⁴³ Thus De Laet shared Purchas's interest in the manuscript as a historical source, and credited it with the same authority as Spanish published accounts. However, his selective use of material from Purchas's *Mendoza* as information spread through various chapters lost the sense of the codex as a document. For him, it was one more source for the study of Nahua rule, rather than the unique indigenous document that Purchas had considered it to be.

The French Orientalist Melchisédech Thévenot (ca. 1620–1692) followed a rather different strategy when he used Purchas as the source for an *Histoire de l'empire Mexicain, représentée par figures* (*History of the Mexican Empire represented in pictures*), a fascicle in his *Relations des divers voyages curieux* (*Reports*

41 'L'art decrire', 'par certaines peintures, qui estoient comme hieroglyphiques', see Laet Johannes de, *L'Histoire du Nouveau Monde ou description des Indes* (Leiden, Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevier: 1640) book 5, ch. 10, 154.

42 'Succession des Rois de Mexique selon leurs Annales peintes', see Laet, *L'Histoire* book 5, ch. 13, 160–162.

43 Gómara Francisco López de, *Historia general de las Indias* (Antwerp, Martin Nucio: 1552); Acosta José de, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Sevilla, Juan de Leon: 1590).

of various curious voyages, Paris, Thomas Moette: 1672–1696).⁴⁴ Thévenot commissioned copies of every single one of Purchas's numerous woodcuts, and his chapter opens with forty-seven pages of printed images, without any words. Only after the full suite of woodcuts does the text commence—a French translation of Purchas's English translation of the original Spanish interpretation of the Nahua oral and pictorial account. In Thévenot's version, the image receives primacy and is also presented as formally dissociated from the text, giving the impression of two separate documents, one pictorial and one textual, as opposed to a single manuscript that brings image and word into dialogue on every single page. It is also worth noting that Thévenot promoted the view of Moctezuma's palace to the position of frontispiece [Fig. 9.9], rather than the historical view of Tenochtitlan [Figs. 9.2, 9.8] that Purchas made iconic—it was this woodcut more than any other that later authors reproduced. By focusing on the depiction of royal authority as a representation of Aztec imperial history rather than on the calendrical or numerical glyphs that so interested other interpreters as instances of hieroglyphic writing, Thévenot's frontispiece suggests a shift in the interpretation of the similarities and differences between European and Mexica traditions.

A third example is provided by the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680), who turned to Purchas's *Mendoza* for comparative material in his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Rome, Vitalis Mascardi: 1652–1654). In this characteristically complex work, Kircher attempted to recover the secrets of ancient Egyptian religion and science by deciphering their hieroglyphic writing. To that end, he examined almost all of the hieroglyphic inscriptions known to Europeans at that time, as well as comparative material from around the globe. Kircher took the widespread European notion that Mexican pictographs were hieroglyphs—another act of cultural translation—to its extreme conclusion, considering them a testament to the spread of Egyptian culture throughout the world.⁴⁵

Confined in the library, the *Mendoza* continued to move in print. It was included in travel collections as a source on Amerindian civilization. It provided material for the comparative study of cultures, religions, languages, and

44 Dew N., "Reading Travels in the Culture of Curiosity: Thévenot's Collection of Voyages", *Journal of Early Modern History* 10 (2006) 39–59.

45 Stolzenberg D., *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity* (Chicago, IL: 2013). See also Curran B., *The Egyptian Renaissance: The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy* (Chicago, IL: 2007) and Hamann B.E., "How Maya Hieroglyphs Got Their Name: Egypt, Mexico, and China in Western Grammatology Since the Fifteenth Century", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 152 (2008) 1–68.



FIGURE 9.9 Title page to Thomas Gage, *Histoire de l'empire mexicain, représentée par figures* (Paris, André Cramoisy: 1673). Published in Melchisédec Thévenot, *Relations des diverses voyages curieux* (Paris, André Cramoisy: 1663–1696). San Marino, CA, The Huntington Library.
 IMAGE © THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY.

writing systems. It was recruited into discussions about European colonial and commercial expansion and competition. It served antiquarians and collectors. It allowed for evolutionary arguments about the relative civility or primitivism of various cultures. And so on and on, multiplying with astonishing interpretive malleability. For almost two hundred years, printed translations of the codex produced numerous distinct versions, multiplying the object through interpretations while the manuscript itself remained for the most part out of sight, confined to the library.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which translation mediated the production and circulation of cross-cultural knowledge in the early modern world. Like many other rarities and curiosities from non-European lands, the *Codex Mendoza* was valued both in its place of origin and in many other locations, and this interest is reflected in its multiple owners and many travels from Mexico City across the Atlantic to Europe, and then to Paris, London, and Oxford—and it continues to travel today as a regular presence in high-profile exhibitions.⁴⁶ But while many, if not most, early modern objects that moved across distances and cultures left tenuous traces in the documentary record, making it hard for scholars who value them today to reconstruct what historical actors made of them at the time, the *Codex Mendoza* produced a stunning wealth of documented reactions. From the mid-sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century (and beyond), the codex evoked descriptions, comments, questions, and numerous reproductions that, in their selective rendition of the material, created different versions of the document itself. The *Codex Mendoza* thus moved across languages, cultural categories, space, media, time, and interpretive horizons.

An analysis of early modern interpretations of this codex corroborates the heuristic potential of the category of 'sites of mediation'. The one constant in the codex's life was translation, as a form of mediation. The manuscript was created through processes of linguistic and cultural mediation, 'translated'—that is, moved—across space and media, and then refashioned again and again

46 For example, *Treasures of the Bodleian*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 30 September to 23 December 2011, <http://treasures.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> (accessed: 02.08.2016) and *Marks of Genius: Treasures from the Bodleian Library*, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, NY, 6 June to 28 September 2014, <http://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/marks-of-genius> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

through interpretations. Translation was a mechanism not for duplication or reproduction, but rather for multiplication and *re*-production; it created versions, impressions, approximations, and rough equivalences rather than copies. Translation as mediation implied above all transformation.

Tracing the trajectories and transformations of the codex calls into question its ontological stability. Mobility was not a physical accident that befell an object that remained stable and immutable despite its travels, but rather a series of transformative and constitutive acts of mediation, translation, selection, and interpretation that produced multiple versions of the object itself. Mobility made the *Codex Mendoza* flexible, unstable, and prone to mutability—as was the case with other early modern objects that moved across space and culture.⁴⁷ This changeling object could be used to ask numerous different questions and to provide numerous different answers. In various places and moments, viewers turned the pages and poured over the images and the words, creating their own *Codex Mendoza*.

Beyond its focus on the *Codex Mendoza* as a case study, this chapter has probed some of the ways in which the idea of ‘sites of mediation’ might open up new approaches and provide new insights into early modern histories. The chapter suggests the value of exploring the many potential meanings of the idea of a ‘site’ to encompass not just physical locations—such as the *Wunderkammer*, the library, the garden, the marketplace, or the ship—but also other types of settings. In this period, books could function as sites, providing access to distant locales and new cultural horizons. Early modern books often functioned as collections, especially those that dealt with travel or with cumulative and comparative approaches to the cultures and regions of the world: the age of the rise of the *Wunderkammer* also saw the invention of the geographical atlas and the print collection, and the explosion of the travel anthology. And authors often turned to books and reading as metaphors for knowledge making, as when they spoke of ‘reading the book of nature’.⁴⁸ The book, I suggest, played a key role in both the situatedness and the mobility of knowledge in this period. Books operated as much in the realm of libraries as in the realm of ships. Furthermore, the chapter suggests that books were neither static nor stable, often moving across places, cultures, and media. They functioned not only as textual objects but as visual and material ones as well, and often

47 This is in opposition to Bruno Latour’s influential idea of ‘immutable mobiles’. See, for instance, Latour B., *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA: 1987) 215–257.

48 See, for instance, Kusakawa S., *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago, IL: 2012).

demonstrated a heightened awareness of questions of media. It might thus be more appropriate to consider 'mediations' rather than 'mediation', bringing the various types of movements and negotiations that the word suggests into interplay. Such a multi-layered approach puts into sharp relief both the connectedness and the disconnectedness of early modern histories.

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Collaborative Craftsmanship and Chimeric Creation in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp Art Cabinets¹

Nadia Baadj

In 1565 Samuel Quiccheberg, the Antwerp-born physician and curator of the Munich *Kunstammer*, published the *Inscriptiones vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi* (Inscriptions or Titles of the Most Ample Theatre), a treatise and guide for princely collectors.² In it, he devotes significant attention to the wide variety of cabinets, caskets, chests, and boxes in the ducal collection. He illuminates the broad range of materials and formats represented in cabinets that featured the virtuoso craftsmanship of woodworkers, blacksmiths, braziers, stoneworkers, embroiderers, glassblowers, turners, and sculptors.³ In addition to discussing the practical functions and strategic design features of containers tailored to encase specific objects, Quiccheberg (1529–1567) also emphasizes their value as objects worthy of study and contemplation. His vivid descriptions of cabinets suggest that, like early modern collections, they functioned as practical sites for generating knowledge about art, materials, and technology.

Quiccheberg's notion of the cabinet as a dynamic site for knowledge production was later taken up elsewhere in southern Germany. In the first three decades of the 1600s, the Augsburg merchant and diplomat Philipp Hainhofer (1578–1647) spearheaded the design and manufacture of customized luxury cabinets that incorporated exquisite craftsmanship, precious objects, and *naturalia* and mirrored, on a miniature scale, the composition and organization

1 This chapter is part of ongoing research for a larger project on early modern Netherlandish cabinets. I wish to thank Ellen Konowitz for organizing the original Historians of Netherlandish Art conference panel out of which this text grew. I am also grateful to the editors and the other contributors to this volume who provided insightful comments and feedback on earlier drafts.

2 For an English translation and critical introduction to Quiccheberg's text, see Meadow M.A. – Robertson B., *The First Treatise on Museums: Samuel Quiccheberg's Inscriptiones, 1565* (Los Angeles, CA: 2013). Another thoughtful analysis of Quiccheberg's conception of the *Kunstammer* can be found in Pilaski K.A., *The Munich Kunstammer: Art, Nature, and the Representation of Knowledge in Courtly Contexts* (Tübingen: 2013), esp. chapter 2.

3 Meadow – Robertson, *The First Treatise* 80, 89–90.

of princely *Kunstkammern*, such as those in Munich, Prague, and Vienna.⁴ The success of Hainhofer's so-called *Schreibtische* was short-lived, however, due to contracting demand for these opulent, esoteric objects intended for the noble elite and to the decreased production in Augsburg of all types of cabinets following the Thirty Years' War.⁵ Ultimately, it was not in southern Germany, but in Quiccheberg's native Antwerp that the art cabinet reached its greatest potential as both a catalyst for artistic, material, and technical knowledge intended for a wide range of audiences and as a composite object that embodied multiple different spaces and their respective functions (collection, art gallery, and laboratory).

By the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century, a novel kind of multi-authored, multimedia cabinet containing small oil paintings emerged as one of Antwerp's signature art forms and export goods, propelling the city to become the leading centre for cabinet production in Europe [Fig. 10.1].⁶ Unlike Hainhofer's custom-made cabinets for the nobility, which were intended primarily as diplomatic gifts, most Antwerp art cabinets were produced without a specific patron or client in mind and instead were delivered to art dealers undecorated so that materials and cost could be adapted to different clients and markets, thus greatly expanding the range of sizes, styles, and price categories. In seventeenth-century probate inventories and sales records, these cabinets are referred to by many different, and often interchangeable or ambiguous, terms including 'cabinet', 'cantoor', 'tresor', and 'schribaen', among others.⁷ The relatively modern term *kunstkast* (art cabinet) has been used by Ria Fabri and other scholars to distinguish Antwerp art cabinets decorated with paintings and costly materials from more ordinary types of furniture.⁸ Along with providing a more consistent and comprehensive way of describing

4 On Hainhofer's involvement in cabinet production, see especially Emmendorfer C. (ed.), *Wunderwelt: Der Pommersche Kunstschränk* (Berlin: 2014); Mundt B., *Der Pommersche Kunstschränk des Augsburger Unternehmers Philipp Hainhofer für Herzog Philipp II. von Pommern* (Munich: 2009).

5 On the emergence, apex, and decline of Augsburg cabinet production, see Baarsen R., *17th-Century Cabinets* (Amsterdam – Zwolle: 2000) 2–23.

6 For an overview of seventeenth-century Antwerp art cabinets, see Fabri R., *De 17de-eeuwse Antwerpse kunstkast: Typologische en historische aspecten* (Brussels: 1991); Fabri R., *De 17de-eeuwse Antwerpse kunstkast: Kunsthistorische aspecten* (Brussels: 1993); Dupré S., "Trading Luxury Glass, Picturing Collections and Consuming Objects of Knowledge in Early Seventeenth-Century Antwerp", *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010) 53–78.

7 On the terminology of seventeenth-century cabinets produced both in and outside of the Netherlands, see Fabri, *Typologische en historische aspecten* 19–25.

8 Fabri, *Typologische en historische aspecten* 25.



FIGURE 10.1 *Anon., Antwerp, Art cabinet painted with mythological scenes (ca. 1650). Softwood, whitewood, oak, ebony, black-stained wood, tortoiseshell, bone, oil paint, 164.5 × 113.5 × 51 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. no. BK-NM-11906-1). IMAGE © RIJKSMEUSEM, AMSTERDAM.*

these cabinets, *kunstkast* also underscores their specific associations with art in Antwerp, especially with paintings and their display inside the *kunstkamer*. Thus, although the term *kunstkast* was not, as far as I have been able to determine, used before the nineteenth century, it is particularly useful in the context of this chapter, where the cabinet is considered as a potential source for understanding modes of early modern art-making and appreciation, as well as a site for inspiring new art forms, such as the so-called cabinet picture.⁹

9 To my knowledge, the earliest use of the term *kunstkast* to refer specifically to seventeenth-century cabinets occurs in Vogelsang W., *Catalogus van de meubelen in het Nederlandsch Museum voor geschiedenis en kunst te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: 1907).

While it shares certain formal and conceptual aspects with both Hainhofer's cabinets and the sixteenth-century Spanish *escritorio*, the *kunstkast* developed into a distinctive art form that was shaped by and ultimately helped shape seventeenth-century Antwerp, then a global hub for raw materials, skilled craftspeople, and technical, material, and natural knowledge from around the world as well as a promoter of high-level craftsmanship and specialized collaboration. The materials, media, and technical expertise displayed in *kunstkasten* showcased the diverse local community of artists and artisans that comprised Antwerp's Guild of St. Luke. In addition, the *kunstkast's* incorporation of pictorial programs that quoted from popular paintings, prints, and book illustrations not only advertised its own status as an innovative product, but also contributed to brand recognition of Netherlandish artists and imagery throughout the world. The integration of miniature oil paintings into cabinet façades, which resonate strongly with the local genre of painted picture galleries, and the inclusion of mirrored perspectives were also unique to Antwerp cabinets. With these two additions, *kunstkasten* offered potential clients both a portable art gallery and a laboratory for optical experimentation and entertainment, which undoubtedly appealed to the city's large population of *liefhebbers* (a category of art collectors who presented themselves as possessing superior connoisseurial intuition and skills) and individuals involved in the production and exchange of scientific and technical knowledge.

The significance placed on *kunstkasten* in seventeenth-century Netherlandish inventories, sales records, paintings, and other archival documents, bears further consideration and raises a number of questions about their early modern production, status, functions, and reception.¹⁰ As noted recently, although ample scholarship exists about the contents, logic, and conceptual frameworks of early modern cabinets of curiosities, in the sense of rooms used to house and display specimens and natural and handcrafted objects, critical analysis of the (more) microcosmic, self-contained cabinets that were often

10 See, for example, the probate inventories and related legal documents in the Antwerp notarial archives transcribed and published in Duverger E., *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, 14 vols. (Brussels: 1984–2009); the sales records of Antwerp art dealers such as the Forchondt family and Matthijs Musson in Denucé J., *Kunstuitvoer in de 17e eeuw te Antwerpen: De Firma Forchoudt* (Antwerp: 1931) and Duverger E., *Nieuwe gegevens betreffende de kunsthandel van Matthijs Musson en Maria Fourmenois te Antwerpen tussen 1633 en 1681* (Ghent: 1969); and seventeenth-century paintings of domestic interiors, for example by Jan van der Heyden and Hieronymus Janssens.

located inside such spaces is scarce at best.¹¹ Until now, *kunstkasten* have been discussed mainly in the context of early modern furniture or decorative arts. This is at least partly due to the *kunstkast*'s resistance to modern classification schemes that promote a hierarchical relationship among different media and impose ahistorical boundaries between those media. As objects that emerged in a time of extensive cross-fertilization between media, when few clear-cut distinctions existed between fine art, the decorative, and high craft, it is essential to reconsider *kunstkasten* in early modern terms. As I will show, the early modern concept of the chimera, a monstrous mythological creature whose body was formed from the parts of multiple animals and which was by the seventeenth century associated with combinatory creation and invention, variety, imagination, and wit, may be an especially productive analogy for the production, format, and reception of the *kunstkast*.

It is equally helpful to examine the *kunstkast* in relation to the early modern multivalency of the term 'cabinet', which not only signified a piece of furniture, but also referred to a variety of spaces with different architectural configurations, functions, and associations. A cabinet could refer simultaneously to private rooms designated for governmental functions or the storage of objects of great monetary or knowledge value, as well as to spaces associated with collecting, contemplation, and display.¹² Acknowledging the spatial dimensions of the early modern term 'cabinet' underscores such criteria as mobility, experience, display, narrative, and viewing practices. In this context, Daniela Bleichmar's recent appeal for the importance of approaching the collection as a dynamic space, as opposed to merely an assemblage of objects, can be extended to the *kunstkast*, which is in many ways a collection in miniature.¹³ Associating the term 'cabinet' with a range of spaces and physical and mental experiences would have been commonplace not only for early modern viewers, but also for readers of the multitude of contemporary texts that employed

11 Adamson G., "The Labor of Division: Cabinetmaking and the Production of Knowledge", in Cook H.J. – Meyers A.R.W. – Smith P.H. (eds.), *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge* (Ann Arbor, MI: 2014) 243–279, at 249.

12 Moran S.J., "The Right Hand of Pictura's Perfection: Cornelis de Bie's *Het gulden cabinet* and Antwerp Art in the 1660s", in Göttler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J. (eds.), *Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 64 (Leiden: 2014) 331–358, esp. 342–344.

13 Bleichmar D., "Seeing the World in a Room: Looking at Exotica in Early Modern Collections", in Bleichmar D. – Mancall P.C. (eds.), *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, PA: 2013) 15–30, at 30.

the word ‘cabinet’ in their titles, inviting witty metaphors involving the book’s structure and contents and real or imagined spaces.¹⁴

This chapter re-evaluates the significance of Antwerp art cabinets, not as static, internally-oriented containers of things, but rather, as Quiccheberg’s text suggests, as dynamic, complex objects in their own right. As multimedia zones of intersection between diverse people, places, objects, cultural and visual idioms, media, and materials, *kunstkasten* stimulated innovation and inventiveness as well as reflected a community that was linked by shared skills and knowledge. Taking the experiential aspects of these cabinets as a point of departure for examining their production, form, function, and reception repositions meaning and agency within their composite materials and craftsmanship. Furthermore, thinking of these cabinets not as mere receptacles, but instead in terms of their mobility and portability (internally, within rooms, and across the globe), and interactive potential (as objects, frames, and examples of a new kind of genre), reveals how they operated as active sites that mediated between micro- and macrocosm, local and foreign, past and present, ornament and utility, pictorial and plastic arts, and two- and three-dimensional space.

Opening Up the Cabinet

Although art cabinets are often displayed in modern museums in a closed state and against a wall, the seventeenth-century *kunstkast* was far from a static piece of furniture.¹⁵ It could be moved from room to room, walked around, closed and opened up to reveal multiple interior layers, and used as a container or a writing surface. A seventeenth-century Antwerp *kunstkast* is a multisensory experience that unfolds in multiple stages, as demonstrated by working our way from the outermost doors to the innermost compartment of a typical example in the collection of the Rijksmuseum [Fig. 10.2].¹⁶ When closed,

14 For example, Cornelis de Bie’s *Het gulden cabinet van de edel vry schilder-const* (The Golden Cabinet of the Noble Liberal Art of Painting), a series of artist biographies interspersed with eulogizing poems promoting local painters that was published in Antwerp in 1662. See also, Moran, “The Right Hand” 344.

15 An exception is the exhibition “The Golden Cabinet”, on view at the Rockoxhuis in Antwerp from February 2013 until the end of 2016. The exhibition includes several seventeenth-century *kunstkasten* that are displayed with open doors and drawers so that the miniature perspective chambers and various objects inside—shells, coins, etc.—can be viewed.

16 The iconography and authorship of the cabinet illustrated here is discussed in Fabri, *Kunsthistorische aspecten* 111–112.



FIGURE 10.2 *Anon., Antwerp, Painted cabinet decorated with scenes from the life of the Virgin (ca. 1630–1650). Oak, ebony, whitewood, ivory, iron, oil paint, glass, 119 × 60 × 31 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. no. BK-NM-1014). IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.*

exterior doors featuring finely-wrought, multi-tiered surfaces of veneered ebony and various other woods, as well as ivory evoke a host of material associations. Upon opening the outer doors, the viewer is immediately drawn in by endless drawers that frequently feature miniature oil paintings on wood, copper, or marble panels [Fig. 10.3]. In the seventeenth century, novel serial formats for depicting popular biblical and historical narratives, local and foreign landscapes, and natural specimens guided the eye and framed the viewing and interpretation of such images. Like the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish triptychs and composite altarpieces that preceded them, *kunstkasten* reframed pictorial programs in a format that merges aspects of painting, architecture and sculpture.¹⁷



FIGURE 10.3 Detail of Fig. 10.2: Cabinet with outer doors open.

17 On the similarly haptic and kinetic experience of these multimedia objects, see Jacobs L., *Opening Doors: The Early Netherlandish Triptych Reinterpreted* (University Park, PA: 2011), and Jacobs L., *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380–1550: Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 1998).

In some cases, opening the larger, central door inside the cabinet reveals a recessed chamber of multiple tiny mirrors, a so-called *perspectieffe* [Fig. 10.4].¹⁸ Rooted in catoptrics, a branch of optics that deals with the production of illusions through the use of mirrors and reflected light, and related to the optical games described by Giambattista Della Porta in his *Magia Naturalis* of 1558, *perspectieffes* prompted viewers to interact with the cabinet and the surrounding space by moving eyes, hands, fingers, and objects, and by making images mobile on drawers and lids and in mirrors [Fig. 10.5].¹⁹ Concealed even further



FIGURE 10.4 Detail of Fig. 10.2: Cabinet with interior door open, revealing *perspectieffe*.

- 18 On *perspectieffes*, see Dupré S., "Images in the Air: Optical Games, Magic and Imagination", in Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Intersections 9 (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2007) 71–92, esp. 80–83; Fabri R., "Perspectieffes in het spel: Optische 'Spielereien' in Antwerpse Kunstkasten uit de Zeventiende Eeuw", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 14 (1998) 109–117; Fabri R., "Experiment en doctrina: Optische Spelletjes in Spiegelkamers van Antwerpse Cantoren en het Ontraadselen van Exempla", in Jongste J. de – Roding J. – Thijs B. (eds.), *Vermaak van de elite in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Hilversum: 1999) 241–261; Dupré, "Trading Luxury Glass". On the longer tradition of optics and catoptrics in Netherlandish art, see Preimesberger R., "Zu Jan van Eycks Diptychon der Sammlung Thyssen-Bornemisza", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 54 (1991) 459–489.
- 19 Dupré, "Images in the Air".



FIGURE 10.5 Detail of Fig. 10.2: Perspectiefje.

behind and beneath the cabinet's mirrored, painted, embroidered, and inlaid doors and drawers are false surfaces and secret storage compartments, which were often used for hiding and transporting valuables.

As illustrated by this brief virtual tour of a fairly typical Antwerp *kunstkast*, the complexity of design required early modern viewers to navigate multiple zones within the cabinet and enabled them to explore, in material form, different types of knowledge and their entanglements. The cabinet's explicitly bounded spaces and thresholds not only juxtaposed different materials, media, and pictorial programs, but also helped to create meaning through the dynamic kinetic and haptic acts of their navigation.

Moreover, *kunstkasten* possessed the capacity to mediate between diverse people, places, objects, and knowledge on multiple levels. First, as objects with German and Spanish origins that were reappropriated in Antwerp, constructed from globally-sourced materials and artisanal knowledge, and marketed, exchanged, and imitated around the world, *kunstkasten* were truly cross-cultural objects and sites of material globalization that were embedded in a complex matrix of commercial and patronage networks spanning Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Second, as fluid and interactive frameworks,

Antwerp art cabinets provided a new medium for communicating an increasing body of knowledge about art, natural science, materials, and the rapidly globalizing world. Their three-dimensional form, portability, and movable parts (such as doors, drawers, and lids) reformulated and translated objects, images, and texts for new audiences and contexts. Furthermore, the composite and collaborative construction of such cabinets stimulated dynamic interactions between different guild specializations, luxury industries, and craftspeople, as well as between the arts, architecture, and the natural sciences. Third, the labyrinthine, architectonic spaces of the *kunstkast* created real and imagined spaces through entrances, exits, portals, and illusions generated by mirrors and other reflective surfaces. Thresholds were also activated beyond the cabinet doors, since *kunstkasten* worked in tandem with windows, doors, and other objects in the room. Contemporary written and pictorial sources reveal that they were often placed in the most prominent locations in a room and were positioned directly beneath large mirrors or monumental history paintings in order to underscore their importance [Fig. 10.6].²⁰

Chimeric Creations

As mentioned earlier, the compositeness of Antwerp *kunstkasten* poses a challenge to scholars and curators seeking to classify these multimedia objects that bisect multiple categories, from decorative arts and furniture to paintings and sculpture. The diverse geographic origins of the format, raw materials, and manufacturers of *kunstkasten* likewise complicate their object identity. The term 'hybrid' has often been used to describe early modern objects in which different materials and cultural identities converge. For example, in her work on nautilus shells that originated in the southwest Pacific Ocean and were mounted in the seventeenth century by silver- and goldsmiths in the Netherlands, Marsely Kehoe defines hybridity as 'a dynamic interactive process in which two or more identities compete within an object'.²¹ Annemarie Jordan Gschwend's classification of compound ornate vessels from this period as 'Indo-Portuguese' likewise emphasizes the tension between incongruous identities and suggests that one must always be considered in relation to the

20 Gage F., "Some Stirring or Changing of Place': Vision, Judgement and Mobility in Pictures of Galleries", in Marr A. (ed.), *Picturing Collections in Early Modern Europe*, special issue of *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010) 123–145, at 137.

21 Kehoe M., "The Nautilus Cup Between Foreign and Domestic in the Dutch Golden Age", *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 35 (2011) 275–285, at 276.



FIGURE 10.6 *Hieronymus Janssens, Family Portrait (1666). Oil on canvas, 79.7 × 121.7 cm. Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna (inv. no. GE 316).*
IMAGE © LIECHTENSTEIN, THE PRINCELY COLLECTIONS, VADUZ-VIENNA.

other.²² Yet, such notions of hybridity that emphasize its status as an inseparable mixture fail, in my opinion, to adequately capture the unique combinatory nature of the *kunstkast*. I propose that terms like chimeric, composite, and combinatory are preferable to hybrid, which is ahistorical and lacks the multi-valent dimensions of the early modern concept of the chimera.

In biological terms, a chimera and a hybrid are two different things, the first indicating mixing at the cellular level and the latter at the even more microscopic, genetic level. Thus, while a true hybrid possesses a combination of genes from each parent or donor, a chimera retains genetically distinct cells from each source. Similarly, although different elements intersect in *kunstkasten*, they do not compete, nor do they fully blend and efface their independent identities. The *kunstkast*, I contend, preserves its different components alongside one another like the mythical chimera, whose combination of various animal parts remains transparent. Furthermore, while the term ‘hybrid’ was used only rarely until the nineteenth century, and in a biological context, by the seventeenth century the chimera was directly associated with

22 Jordan Gschwend A., “A Masterpiece of Indo-Portugese Art: The Mounted Rhinoceros Cup of Maria of Portugal, Princess of Parma”, *Oriental Art* 46 (2000) 48–58.

art, combinatory creation, invention, and the imagination, making it a more appropriate term for describing the *kunstkast*.²³

The proliferation of written and visual descriptions of chimeras in the early modern era indicates that creative invention through combination had become a central aim of the artistic process.²⁴ First published in Antwerp in 1607, Otto van Veen's *Emblemata Horatiana* has been described as an inventive composite, resulting from the collaboration of multiple, skilled practitioners and the masterful combination of diverse textual and visual material.²⁵ As noted by Margit Thøfner, the combinatory nature and collaborative production of Van Veen's (ca. 1556–1629) project are underscored in the emblem entitled 'Cuique suum studium' (Each according to his own passion), which features an image of a painter and a poet sitting side by side, the former engaged in portraying a winged chimera with a human head, a horse's neck, hooves, and the tail of a fish [Fig. 10.7].²⁶ The juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible naturalistic anatomical parts to create a novel and coherent form parallels Van Veen's accumulation of a wide range of ancient and early modern textual and visual sources.²⁷ Furthermore, the depiction of other professions, represented by the doctor examining a flask of urine and the smiths working in the background, coupled with the emblem's title and the citation from the ancient poet Horace directly below it, 'Quam scit uterque, libens censebo, exerceat artem' (What I shall advise is that each contentedly practise the trade he understands)²⁸ assert the importance of specialized collaboration, which in this particular

23 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, in the seventeenth century 'hybrid' (or the Latin form 'hybrida') was used mainly in the context of animal cross-breeding, and then only rarely: "Hybrid, n. and adj.," *OED Online*, March 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89809?redirectedFrom=hybrid> (accessed: 02.08.2016). The same appears to be true of the French 'hybride'.

24 Swan C., "Counterfeit Chimeras: Early Modern Theories of the Imagination and the Work of Art", in Payne A. (ed.), *Vision and its Instruments: Art, Science, and Technology in Early Modern Europe* (University Park, PA: 2015) 216–237.

25 Thøfner M., "Making a Chimera: Invention, Collaboration and the Production of Otto Vaenius's *Emblemata Horatiana*", in Adams A. – Weij M. van der (eds.), *Emblems of the Low Countries: A Book Historical Perspective* (Glasgow: 2003) 17–44.

26 Van Veen made at least two preliminary oil sketches for the engraving, which also includes the first words of Horace's dictum about poetic license, 'pictoribus atque poetis quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas', just below the chimeric figure. On the preliminary sketches and the subsequent engraving, see Thøfner, "Making a Chimera" 42–44. Van Veen's chimera is further discussed by Christine Göttler in "Vulcan's Forge: The Sphere of Art in Early Modern Antwerp", in Dupré S. – Göttler C. (eds.), *Knowledge and Discernment in the Early Modern Arts* (New York, NY: forthcoming).

27 Thøfner, "Making a Chimera".

28 Horace, *Epistles*, I, 14, 44. Translation from Thøfner, "Making a Chimera" 42.



FIGURE 10.7 Anon. after Otto van Veen, "Cuique suum stadium", in Otto van Veen, *Emblemata Horatiana* (Antwerp, Henricum Wetstenium: 1607). Engraving, 18 × 14.7 cm. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

IMAGE © KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK, THE HAGUE.

case involved Van Veen, as inventor of emblems and general project manager, and numerous engravers, printers, and the publisher.²⁹

As Van Veen's emblem suggests, in the early modern period the kind of chimera described by Horace in his *Ars Poetica* became a critical touchstone for

29 Thøfner, "Making a Chimera" 32–39.

artists, poets, philosophers, physicians, and others interested in exploring the power and limits of the imagination.³⁰ However, in contrast to Horace's employment of the chimera as a caution against inappropriate poetic license, by the turn of the sixteenth century these monstrous confections acquired a more positive connotation that linked them to theories of the imagination as well as to the theory and practice of art.³¹ Chimeric creatures figure prominently in early modern artworks across a wide range of media, including paintings, drawings, and prints by Leonardo, Michelangelo, Martin Schongauer, Matthias Grünewald, and Hieronymous Bosch, among others. Furthermore, written accounts by several visitors to the Munich *Kunstammer* around 1600, including two separate accounts by the aforementioned Augsburg cabinet designer Philipp Hainhofer, also mention a chimera at the entrance.³² Alternately described as a 'hydra with 7 heads, 2 hands, 4 feet, and 4 tails', a 'monster with 7 heads and three tails', and 'the stuffed skin of a seven-headed dragon', the chimera at the entrance of the *Kunstammer* simultaneously conjured up curiosity, wonder, and repulsion by those who encountered it.³³ Positioning the chimera at this threshold has further significance in relation to the space and contents of the *Kunstammer*, which was likewise compositely constructed from not entirely compatible parts, yet formed a coherent whole. Moreover, this juxtaposition underscores the association of the *Kunstammer* (and *kunstkast*) and chimera with period notions of curiosity, variety, invention, creativity, wit, and imagination.

Antwerp Cabinets in Context: A City in Miniature

The emergence and rise of the *kunstkast* paralleled a number of pivotal changes in Antwerp's cultural, economic, and intellectual milieu around 1600. During the latter part of the sixteenth century there was a marked diversification of pictorial genres and types of furniture, as well as a heightened focus on luxury industries in Antwerp.³⁴ These factors, along with a local artistic

30 Swan, "Counterfeit Chimeras".

31 Swan, "Counterfeit Chimeras"; Summers D., *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton, NJ: 1981) esp. 103–143.

32 Diemer D. – Diemer P. – Seelig L. (eds.), *Die Münchner Kunstammer*, 3 vols. (Munich: 2008) vol. 3, 85–86.

33 Diemer – Diemer – Seelig, *Die Münchner Kunstammer* vol. 3, 85–86.

34 Filip Vermeulen notes that the registers from 1553 include much greater variety than in previous decades, e.g. cabinets, small wood chests to store valuables (*trésors de bois*),

culture that fostered high-level collaboration and skilled craftsmanship, laid the groundwork for the emergence of the *kunstkast* as one of the city's chief export goods in the seventeenth century.³⁵

Kunstkasten were microcosms of the diverse production of Antwerp craft guilds, cutting across a wide range of media and manual specializations and incorporating the materials, techniques, and knowledge of painters, engravers, locksmiths, ebonists, glassmakers, embroiderers, and silversmiths, among others. The *kunstkast* served as a showcase for the wide range of professions and the community of knowledge represented in the Guild of St. Luke in particular. Art cabinets advertised the products of numerous artists and artisans and provided a new model for contemplating relationships between various pictorial and plastic arts. The chimeric juxtaposition of multiple media in the *kunstkast* not only served a strategic, promotional function in that it celebrated craft and collaboration, but it also positioned the cabinet as a dynamic laboratory for a multitude of crafts and manual disciplines and subsequently as a catalyst for artistic innovation.

Antwerp's cosmopolitan environment, famously described by the Florentine merchant and humanist Lodovico Guicciardini in his 1567 *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (Description of All the Low Countries), also shaped and was shaped by *kunstkast* production.³⁶ Guicciardini (1521–1589) marvelled at the city's extensive range of raw materials from around the world, seemingly limitless pool of expert craftsmen, linguistic pluralism, openness to foreign collaboration, and novel, high-quality artisanal production. Antwerp's role as a locus of different cultures, goods, and expertise from throughout the world

globes, etc. Vermeulen F., *Painting for the Market: Commercialization of Art in Antwerp's Golden Age* (Turnhout: 2003) 97.

35 On the extent and character of artistic collaboration in early modern Antwerp, see Honig E., *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven, CT: 1998), and Honig E., „Paradise Regained: Rubens, Jan Brueghel, and the Sociability of Visual Thought“, in Jong J. de – Ramakers B. – Scholten F. – Westermann M. – Woodall J. (eds.), *Rubens and the Netherlands*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 55 (Zwolle: 2004) 271–300.

36 For critical discussion of Guicciardini's description of Antwerp, see Limberger M., „No Town in the World Provides More Advantages: Economies of Agglomeration and the Golden Age of Antwerp“, in Hart M. – Keene P. – O'Brien P. (eds.), *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge: 2001) 39–62; Göttler C., „The Place of the 'Exotic' in Early-Seventeenth-Century Antwerp“, in Schrader S. (ed.), *Looking East: Rubens's Encounter with Asia* (Los Angeles, CA: 2013) 88–107; Dixhoorn A. van, „The Values of Antwerp and the Prosperity of Belgica: Political Economy in Guicciardini's *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (1567)“, in Göttler – Ramakers – Woodall, *Trading Values* 76–107.

continued well into the seventeenth century and shaped its status as a cosmopolitan urban centre that, in large part through its culture of things, was both connected to the rest of the world and also demonstrated intense civic pride. Mirroring Antwerp's status as a 'world city', in the sense of a node for both the accumulation of goods and for networks of foreign merchants and artisans that connected the city to other parts of the globe, *kunstkasten* were also dynamic sites of mediation in which globally sourced raw materials, craftspeople, skills, knowledge, and visual traditions intersected and stimulated innovation.³⁷

A number of recent studies of cross-cultural, 'itinerant' objects in the early modern period have demonstrated that the material richness and diversity of this era was not a local or European phenomenon, but rather resulted from a network of impulses that extended far beyond Europe.³⁸ The numerous descriptions of art cabinets in seventeenth-century Antwerp estate inventories and related legal documents transcribed and published by Erik Duverger indicate the extent to which their production relied on foreign materials acquired through vast Netherlandish trade networks.³⁹ In 1660, for example, a 'large beautiful cabinet of tortoise[shell] inlaid with lacquer' was recorded in a list of items stolen from the home of an Antwerp canon and official.⁴⁰ A cabinet made from tortoiseshell, ebony, and ivory with painted interior doors also figures prominently in two similar views of a room filled with exotic objects painted by the Dutch artist Jan van der Heyden [Fig. 10.8].⁴¹ Tortoiseshell, a supreme symbol of luxury in seventeenth-century northern Europe, was imported to Antwerp through Portuguese trade routes and also from the Antilles via Amsterdam,⁴² while the incorporation or imitation of black lacquer was likely inspired by Japanese export lacquerware acquired by the Dutch East India

37 Romano A. – Damme S. van, "Science and World Cities: Thinking Urban Knowledge and Science at Large", *Itinerario* 33 (2009) 79–95.

38 See, for example, Hahn H.P. – Weiss H., "Introduction: Biographies, Travels, and Itineraries of Things", in Hahn H.P. – Weiss H. (eds.), *Mobility, Meaning and the Transformations of Things* (Oxford: 2013) 1–14; Ajmar-Wollheim M. – Molà L., "The Global Renaissance: Cross-Cultural Objects in the Early Modern Period", in Adamson G. – Riello G. – Teasley S. (eds.), *Global Design History* (London: 2011) 11–20; Finlay R., *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley, CA: 2010).

39 Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen*.

40 'Een groot schoon cabinet van schilpat met lack ingeleght'. Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 8, 110.

41 See also, Jan van der Heyden, *Library Interior with Still Life* (1711–1712). Oil on canvas. Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena.

42 Fabri, *Typologische en historische aspecten* 29–30; Rijkelijkhuiizen M., "Tortoiseshell in the 17th and 18th Century Dutch Republic", in Legrand-Pineau A. – Sidéra I. (eds.), *Ancient*



FIGURE 10.8 *Jan van der Heyden, Room Corner with Curiosities (1712). Oil on canvas, 75 × 63.5 cm. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum/Museum of Fine Arts (inv. no. 201).*

IMAGE © SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM/MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BUDAPEST.

Company (voc).⁴³ Other commonly used materials in Antwerp art cabinets include ebony, which came to Antwerp from San Domingo and West Africa via Spanish ports; ivory, a staple of Portuguese traders; and silver, which by the

and Modern Bone Artifacts from America to Russia: Cultural, Technological, and Functional Signature (Oxford: 2010) 97–106.

43 Jervis S., “Ebony at the Argory”, *Apollo* 147 (1998) 42–44, at 42.

seventeenth century was being mined primarily in New Spain and Peru.⁴⁴ Like the metropolis in which they were manufactured, *kunstkasten* were significant centres of accumulation, to borrow Lissa Roberts' term, and their value was in large part linked to their ability to transform exotic raw materials into a locally produced luxury product.⁴⁵

In order to transform these diverse materials, a myriad of specialists was required and, as shown by Sven Dupré, this knowledge often depended on the influx of foreign craftsmen, such as the Italian merchants who set up shop in Antwerp and brought with them the knowledge of how to make *cristallo* glass.⁴⁶ These skilled immigrants shared their knowledge and collaborated with receptive local craftsmen to create cabinets that mediated the familiar and the foreign. Dealers based locally and abroad then determined the most appropriate materials and designs for various audiences all over Europe. For example, the art dealer Jean Michel Picart (ca. 1600–1682), based in Paris, communicated with his counterpart, Matthijs Musson (1598–1678), in Antwerp in order to relay local market tastes, which for Paris meant small or medium-sized cabinets decorated with tortoiseshell.⁴⁷

Tracing the various trade, export, and patronage circuits of *kunstkasten* and their materials reveals complex, multi-faceted object itineraries.⁴⁸ Not only were the raw materials and skilled craft knowledge used in the construction of Antwerp cabinets imported from foreign lands, but the cabinets themselves were frequently exchanged by art dealers in cities like Seville, Cadiz, and Malaga for valuable raw materials that were imported from the Americas.⁴⁹ These included dyes like indigo and cochineal, dried animal skins, tobacco, olive oil, wine, precious stones, and exotic woods. The records of the art dealership firm Forchondt also include instances of exchanging cabinets in Vienna for paintings by major Flemish artists as well as for agate and diamonds.⁵⁰ This circular trajectory, in which raw materials such as pigments, ebony, and

44 On the mining of silver in the New World, which overtook Europe as the overwhelming leader in silver production by the late sixteenth century, see Hamann B., "The Mirrors of *Las Meninas*: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay", *The Art Bulletin* 92 (2010) 6–36, esp. 17–18.

45 Roberts L. (ed.), *Centres and Cycles of Accumulation in and around the Netherlands During the Early Modern Period* (Berlin – Zurich: 2011).

46 Dupré, "Trading Luxury Glass".

47 Baarsen, *17th-Century Cabinets* 30.

48 On the concept of mobile objects and their 'itineraries' see Hahn – Weiss, "Introduction".

49 Fabri, *Typologische en historische aspecten* 189–191.

50 In addition to trading cabinets for diamonds, agate, and other precious stones, the Forchondt records also mention trading cabinets embellished with agate for paintings by Jacob Jordaens, Peter Paul Rubens, and Frans Francken II, among others. Fabri, *Typologische en historische aspecten* 190–191.

silver were imported to the Netherlands from Spain and its colonies to be used as key ingredients in the construction of Antwerp cabinets, which were then exported to those destinations and also traded for other exotic, raw materials from the New World, underscores the mobile and itinerant status of these cabinets as global objects that were continuously reframed by successive acts of translation, collecting, and reinterpretation that contributed to the cabinet's multivalent object identity.⁵¹

While the *kunstkast's* plurality of precious and rare materials underscored Antwerp's significant role in international trade networks on the one hand, its incorporation of a vast range of distinctly Netherlandish imagery boldly asserted Antwerp's traditions, values, and rich art-historical lineage on the other. The collocation of multiple media and pictorial idioms in these cabinets undoubtedly appealed to *liefhebbers* and collectors, who would have appreciated the connoisseurial challenge they offered as well as the opportunity to acquire a portable, miniature collection of artworks. In this sense, the *kunstkast* can be compared to another uniquely Antwerpian art form—the painted *kunstkamer* or 'gallery painting' that emerged around the same time.⁵² Several Antwerp painters, including Frans Francken II (1581–1642), worked in both media, painting small-scale panels to decorate cabinets and also producing easel paintings of collections [Fig. 10.9].⁵³ Both are composite works that feature the collaboration or virtual collaboration of multiple local artists and artisans. Moreover, their juxtaposition of a diverse range of images, styles, and objects provides a framework for contemplating the organization and

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- 51 On the transatlantic trade in cabinet painters' materials, see Fabri R., "Een ramenand van verf ende pinselen: Some Aspects of the Materials Used by Seventeenth-Century Cabinet Painters in Antwerp", in Cannon J. – Kirby J. – Nash S. (eds.), *Trade in Artists' Materials: Markets and Commerce in Europe to 1700* (London: 2010) 366–374. On the exportation of 'German' (a term often used to designate any northern European origin) cabinets to Mexico, see Leibsohn D., "Made in China, Made in Mexico", in Otsuka R. – Pierce D. (eds.), *At the Crossroads: The Arts of Spanish America and Early Global Trade* (Denver, CO: 2012) 11–40, at 23.
- 52 On the origins and evolution of this pictorial genre, see Filipczak Z., *Picturing Art in Antwerp* (Princeton, NJ: 1987); Honig E., "The Beholder as Work of Art: A Study in the Location of Value in Seventeenth-Century Flemish Painting", in Falkenburg R. – Jong J. de – Roodenburg H. – Scholten F. (eds.), *Image and Self-Image in Netherlandish Art, 1550–1750*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 47 (Zwolle: 1995) 253–297; Beneden B. van – Suchtelen A. van (eds.), *Room for Art in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp* (Zwolle: 2009); Marr A., "The Flemish 'Pictures of Collections' Genre: An Overview", in Marr, *Picturing Collections* 5–25.
- 53 The Antwerp painter Jan van Kessel I (1626–1679) is another example of an artist who painted both pictures for cabinets and easel paintings of collections.



FIGURE 10.9 *Frans Francken II, An Art Cabinet (1619). Oil on panel, 56 × 85 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (inv. no. 816).*

IMAGE © KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS.

transformation of things through collecting. The gallery painting's visual commentary on local attitudes towards art, artists, and collecting, or what Zirka Filipczak has called 'art about art', is analogous, in many ways, to the *kunstkast*'s self-conscious and methodical framing of Antwerp pictorial and craft traditions.⁵⁴ In these ways, *kunstkasten* operated similarly to local collections, both real and painted, by stimulating knowledge, inventiveness, and the cross-fertilization of media, and by bringing into focus the city's diverse and international community of making, practicing, learning, and knowing.

The Cabinet as Medium: Framing and Translating Art, Knowledge, and the Exotic

Antwerp art cabinets created and enabled opportunities for fluid transgressions between different media, spaces, and modes of viewing by setting up boundaries that could be grappled with and negotiated by their beholders. The omnipresence of Netherlandish images and their seamless translation across

54 Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp*.



FIGURE 10.10 Anon., Antwerp, paintings possibly by Marten Ryckaert, Art cabinet with painted landscapes (ca. 1640). Oak, pine, gilded copper, ebony, oil paint, 148 × 96 × 43 cm. The Hague, Gemeentemuseum (inv. no. OHO-1957-0001). IMAGE © GEMEENTEMUSEUM, THE HAGUE.

thresholds of space, time, and medium in seventeenth-century art cabinets merits further investigation. Old and New Testament stories, ancient myths, idyllic landscapes [Fig. 10.10], violent hunts, and battle scenes were painted on materials ranging from copper to marble, but were also embroidered [Fig. 10.11], carved in wood or ivory, and inlaid in with precious stones. The religious and mythological scenes that were popular in the first half of the seventeenth century were primarily derived from paintings, print series, or book illustrations; however, the more secular battles, exotic hunts, flora and fauna, and allegories that flourished in the latter part of the century were often original compositions.⁵⁵ Paintings by local, contemporary masters like Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Frans Francken II were popular models, as were prints

55 Fabri, *Kunsthistorische aspecten* 210.



FIGURE 10.11 *Anon., Antwerp, Art cabinet with embroidery (1650–1700). Ebony, gold embroidery on silk, 127 × 64 × 37 cm. Antwerp, Rockox House (inv. no. 7758).*
IMAGE © KBC MUSEUM ROCKOXHUIS, ERWIN DONVIL, ANTWERP.

by an earlier generation of artists that included Marten de Vos (1532–1603), Adriaen Collaert (ca. 1560–1618), and Jan Wierix (1549–ca. 1620). In this way, featured images represented transgressions not just across media and space, but also across time.

The images that decorate Antwerp art cabinets have yet to be looked at critically. The miniature oil paintings, which were typically produced as quickly as possible by anonymous artists, tend to be dismissed as being of poor quality. When they are studied, the primary focus has been on source hunting, or the identification of printed and painted prototypes rather than on any sustained analysis of the works themselves. Images in other media, such as embroidery, stonework, and carving, are usually relegated to a purely formal or technical study. But while the pictorial programs of Antwerp art cabinets may not be particularly noteworthy in terms of quality or originality, their repetition and translation in liminal settings such as doors, drawers, and lids raises interesting questions about the mobility of images between different kinds of media.

Robert Finlay's pivotal study on porcelain contends that the material served as a vehicle for the transmission or assimilation of visual motifs, themes, and idioms across vast geographic and chronological distances.⁵⁶ In a similar vein, Craig Clunas, in his work on early modern Chinese visual culture, argues that when examining images that circulate between multiple media, it is often more useful to think about exchanges between different economies of representation than to seek out stylistic influences or sources.⁵⁷ Clunas's concept of an 'iconic circuit', which denotes a flow or series of images that circulated between different media in which pictorial representation played a key role, emphasizes the fact that visual knowledge often had multiple layers of meaning and shifting points of origin.⁵⁸

These approaches constitute a useful framework for probing the intermediality of *kunstkasten* and the numerous questions raised by their reframing of local art forms, craft specializations, and categories of knowledge for diverse local and foreign audiences. For example, how did the translation of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century printed images into later, three-dimensional movable cabinets affect the images' value, currency, and meaning? How did the interpretation of religious narratives, such as the popular parable of the Prodigal Son, change when depicted on a cabinet without the inscriptions that would normally accompany them? How were exotic images, such as the illustrations in travel accounts and on map borders, translated into painted, lacquerware, and engraved panels on *kunstkasten*? What did it mean to represent the exotic *with* exotic materials on cabinets that often contained imported, rare objects? In what ways did the external visual program and decoration of a cabinet contribute to the understanding of natural specimens or objects stored within its drawers? Furthermore, what did the circulation of exotic or scientific images through multiple, diverse media indicate about the stability or instability of the knowledge they depicted?⁵⁹

In addition to pondering the relationship between the scenes of mythological, religious, and historical narratives and exotic and zoological imagery on the outsides of cabinets and the objects stored inside them, the rise of decorating cabinet façades with pictorial programs also raises questions about how these scenes were organized and read. Both the compartmentalized arrangement of pictorial narratives and the central perspective chambers created

56 Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art*.

57 Clunas C., *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, NJ: 1997). See also Schmidt B., "Accumulating the World: Collecting and Commodifying 'Globalism' in Early Modern Europe", in Roberts, *Centres and Cycles* 129–155.

58 Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality* 47–49.

59 Schmidt, "Accumulating the World" 150.

specific viewing regimes that guided the viewer by segmenting and juxtaposing objects and sets of images; yet, this format also allowed for some degree of flexibility, since the sequence of pictorial scenes was often ambiguous and could be read in a variety of ways, from left to right, clockwise, or from outer edge to central panel.⁶⁰ The ubiquitous late medieval desire to divide and subdivide and to classify and organize knowledge apparent in the framing devices used in earlier encyclopedic texts and altarpieces carried over into the seventeenth century, a period in which a distinctive aesthetic of compartmentalization has been noted.⁶¹ In printed and painted images of religious subjects, subdivided frames, whether real or depicted, provided a means of organizing information and narratives in a visual format. Frans Francken II, for example, made several paintings of biblical subjects in which subdivided grisaille vignettes, which mirror the structure of *kunstkast* façades, form a virtual frame in order to distinguish the central parable from the peripheral narrative [Fig. 10.12]. What is more, seventeenth-century Netherlandish maps frequently framed a central topographic view with bird's-eye views of cities and idealized portraits of native inhabitants. These real and fictive framing systems both defined and activated that which they enclosed, anchoring the structure not only materially, but also narratively.⁶² When seen through the various critical lenses described above, the images that decorate seventeenth-century *kunstkasten* become far more interesting and complex, and the cabinet itself can be viewed as a new kind of medium, as opposed to simply an embellished piece of furniture.

Conclusion

By examining seventeenth-century art cabinets in terms of the creative acts of collecting and display, as well as their chimeric composition and potential for cross-fertilization of native and foreign materials, media, idioms, and knowledge, we can learn much about the integrated nature and global scope of early modern material culture. As objects that go beyond but also interact closely

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- 60 Marchi N. de – Miegroet H.J. Van, "Novelty and Fashion Circuits in the Mid-Seventeenth Century Antwerp-Paris Art Trade", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28 (1998) 201–246, at 216.
- 61 Fock C.W., "Kunst et rariteiten in het Hollandse interieur", in Bergvelt E. – Kistemaker R. (eds.), *De Wereld binnen handbereik: Nederlandse kunst- en rariteiten verzamelingen 1585–1735* (Amsterdam – Zwolle: 1992) 70–91.
- 62 Kemp W., "The Narrativity of the Frame", in Duro P. (ed.), *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge: 1996) 11–23.



FIGURE 10.12 *Frans Francken II, Parable of the Prodigal Son (1600–1620). Oil on panel, 61 × 85 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. no. SK-C-286).*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

with painting and other media, these cabinets encourage us to reconsider modern divisions between media in early modern terms, and to recognize the crucial role played by collaborative craft, dealer intervention, and global commercial networks in establishing and transgressing these thresholds. Moreover, thinking about these chimeric cabinets as active sites of mediation between the pictorial and decorative arts and between optics, architecture, and the natural sciences will, I hope, open up new doors for exploring the complex ways in which these works generated meaning for the artisans, merchants, connoisseurs, naturalists, and collectors who bought, sold, made, and used them and also contributed to a composite and cosmopolitan community of making, learning, and knowing.

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PART 3

Fluid Worlds



Hermaphrodites in Basel? Figures of Ambiguity and the Early Modern Physician

Sarah-Maria Schober

Ambiguity can be considered a signature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Early modern textual and visual sources suggest that people at this time delighted in jokes of nature and revelled in plurivalent stories of *innuendo* and *dissimulatio*, of complexity, motion, and metamorphosis.¹ Yet ambiguity was also perceived as a danger to ongoing and very intense processes of social and natural ordering. This chapter proposes a new reading of the social functions of early modern ambiguity by focusing on the intersection of ambiguity and authority.² It analyses a set of entangled events and sources in

- 1 The idea of ambiguity as a signature of the early modern age is also elaborated—albeit with regard to religion—in Stollberg-Rilinger B. – Pietsch A. (eds.), *Konfessionelle Ambiguität: Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Gütersloh: 2013). Ambiguity has been widely researched in art history and cultural history. Valeska von Rosen focuses on the early modern age, especially on border crossings between the sacred and the profane, which she understands as ‘intended ambiguity’. See Rosen V. von, *Caravaggio und die Grenzen des Darstellbaren: Ambiguität, Ironie und Performativität in der Malerei um 1600* (Berlin: 2009); Rosen V. von, “Res et signa: Formen der Ambiguität in der Malerei des Cinquecento”, in Borsche T. – Bocken I. (eds.), *Kann das Denken malen? Philosophie und Malerei in der Renaissance* (Munich: 2010) 243–279; Rosen V. von (ed.), *Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den Künsten der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: 2012). Especially interesting for its focus on the functions of ambiguity in art is Krieger V. – Mader R. (eds.), *Ambiguität in der Kunst: Typen und Funktionen eines ästhetischen Paradigmas* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienna: 2010). For the delight in jokes of nature see Findlen P., “Jokes of Nature and Jokes of Knowledge: The Playfulness of Scientific Discourse”, *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990) 292–331.
- 2 Authority and its relationship with early modern processes of plurality and pluralization have been addressed in a variety of fields by the research cluster ‘Pluralisierung und Autorität’. Its leading assumption, expressed for example by Müller J.-D. – Robert J., “Poetik and Pluralisierung in der Frühen Neuzeit: Eine Skizze”, in Müller J.-D. – Robert J. (eds.), *Maske und Mosaik: Poetik, Sprache, Wissen im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: 2007) 7–46, is that early modernity as an epoch can be characterized by potentially conflictual processes of pluralization, which called for, formed, and were formed by strategies of authority and authorization. The research group understands the latter as attempts at normation and ordering, while keeping an eye

the early modern city of Basel around 1600 that relate to ambiguous figures and their usage. It is here that the intricate fields of ambiguity—its power to provoke fascination and fear, social pleasure, challenge, and ordering—coalesce, and can be traced by following some of its protagonists and their attempts to create authority.

The Hermaphrodite as a Figure of Ambiguity

In what follows the focus will be on the hermaphrodite—one of the most ambiguous figures in the early modern world.³ The topic of hermaphroditism was passionately debated among naturalists all across early modern Europe. Yet these scientific answers clearly did not exist in a vacuum.⁴ They intersected with broader discourses that impacted the ways in which people with ‘deviant’ sexual behaviour or genitalia were perceived and treated by elite as well as non-elite observers.

The excellent state of the sources in Basel allows us to address these intersections between epistemic object, figure of various projections and concrete

out for their inconsistencies and precarity. See in particular Oesterreicher W. – Regn G. – Schulze W., *Autorität der Form – Autorisierung – Institutionelle Autorität* (Münster: 2003), especially the chapters in the section on ‘Autorisierung’. See also Müller J.-D. – Oesterreicher W. – Vollhardt F. (eds.), *Pluralisierungen: Konzepte zur Erfassung der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin – New York, NY: 2010).

- 3 Recent research on the topic, which will be cited throughout the chapter, has addressed scientific actors and discourses. There are also a number of very important works on legal, social, and/or literary documents and their implications, especially following on Foucault M., *Herculine Barbin dite Alexina B* (Paris: 1978) and Greenblatt S., *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: 1988) 66–93 (chapter on “Fiction and Friction”). Most comprehensive for the early modern hermaphrodite is Gilbert R., *Early Modern Hermaphrodites: Sex and Other Stories* (Basingstoke: 2002). Several monographs treat the topic over longer periods of time: Dreger A.D., *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge, MA: 1998); Klöppel U., *XXoXY ungelöst: Hermaphroditismus, Sex und Gender in der deutschen Medizin. Eine historische Studie zur Intersexualität* (Bielefeld: 2010); Nussberger E., *Zwischen Tabu und Skandal: Hermaphroditen von der Antike bis heute* (Vienna: 2014); Fausto-Sterling A., *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York, NY: 2000); Schochow M., *Die Ordnung der Hermaphroditen: Eine Genealogie des Geschlechtsbegriffs* (Berlin: 2009).
- 4 Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass state that medical discourses could not ‘claim [...] theoretical priority or consistency in defining and producing gender’, see Jones A.R. – Stallybrass P., “Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe”, in Epstein J. – Straub K. (eds.), *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York, NY: 1991) 80–111, at 88.

social acts. My account will bring together treatises by anatomists from Basel with literary texts on ambiguity and documents from the 1609 court case of the alleged Basel hermaphrodite 'Anna Jakob Bürgin'.⁵ This highly interesting case has received virtually no attention to date.⁶ Anna, who later was given the second—male—name 'Jakob', was assessed by neighbours, the city magistrate and physicians. The ambiguity of the case is captured in the striking naming imposed by the court, which combines two first names of opposite gender: Anna and Jakob. Anna Jakob, while not acknowledged as a hermaphrodite by the Basel anatomists, was thus marked as a figure of ambiguity. The analysis of the discussions surrounding the case and the severe actions imposed upon Anna Jakob offer insights into the complex ways in which Basel society operated around 1600. It will further help us to understand perceptions of social boundaries and how violations of them were handled. I will use Basel as an exemplary case to show how social aspects such as gender, sexual relations, and bodies as well as medical expertise and social status were negotiated within the context of an early modern society.

The meanings of the hermaphroditic figure transcend the individual case, turning it into the 'cultural icon' as which Kathleen Long has described it.⁷ However, the meanings suggested by this figure of ambiguity are far from stable or fixed.⁸ The hermaphrodite is a figure of negotiation and of change: In period discourse, it was considered to be deeply fluid. Due to its origins posited

5 A comparison with the famous French case of Marie/Marin le Marcis would be worthwhile, but would exceed the scope of this chapter. For a recent, very interesting analysis of Marie/Marin from a literary perspective, see Brancher D., "Le genre incertain: De l'hermaphrodisme littéraire et médical", in Closson M. (ed.), *L'hermaphrodite de la Renaissance aux Lumières* (Paris: 2013) 32–49.

6 Huber K., *Felix Platters 'Observationes': Studien zum frühneuzeitlichen Gesundheitswesen in Basel* (Basel: 2003) mentions the case at 116–120.

7 Long K.P., *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2006) 2.

8 In recent scholarly literature on the early modern period, the term figure has been used in a variety of contradictory ways, including to denote patterns and roles, embodiments of ideas, relations of similarity or even dissemblance as well as (prophetic) correspondences: Asmussen T. – Burkart L. – Rössler H., *Theatrum Kircherianum: Wissenskulturen und Bücherwelten im 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: 2013) esp. 13–16; Didi-Huberman G., *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration* (Chicago, IL: 1995); Lande J.B. – Schögl R. – Suter R. (eds.), *Dynamische Figuren: Gestalten der Zeit im Barock* (Freiburg: 2013); Sandl M., *Medialität und Ereignis: Eine Zeitgeschichte der Reformation* (Zurich: 2011). The usage of the term in this chapter draws mainly on Erich Auerbach's famous text "Figura" first published in 1938. A translation by Ralph Manheim is to be found in Auerbach E. (ed.), *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: 1984) at 11–76. For a further elaboration of Auerbach's reflections, see Kiening C. – Mertens Fleury K. (eds.), *Figura: Dynamiken der Zeiten und Zeichen im Mittelalter* (Würzburg: 2013).

by Ovid within the waters of the nymph Salmacis and its alchemical link to the fluid and fugitive metallic element of mercury, the figure of the hermaphrodite was iconized as the symbol of unification and conjunction as well as transformation.⁹ At once male, female, and neither,¹⁰ monstrous and alchemically ideal, exotic possibility and potential experience, the hermaphrodite hovered in a continual state of suspension.

Along with their fears, contemporaries shared a widespread pleasure in ambiguity.¹¹ This was the background to the potential of the figure of the hermaphrodite to arouse interest, and to be used in individual actors' bids for authority. Physicians eagerly strove to exploit this potential. Telling and retelling stories of hermaphroditic ambiguity and referring to the surrounding imaginaries gave them the power to enter into discussions and to propose modes of determination. Thus the social potential of the ambiguous figure of the hermaphrodite was deployed in struggles over authority.

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- 9 There is much work on both the alchemical hermaphrodite and the (Renaissance) Ovidian tale. See Long K.P., "Odd Bodies: Reviewing Corporeal Difference in Early Modern Alchemy", in Long K.P. (ed.), *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2010) 63–85; Aurnhammer A., "Zum Hermaphroditen in der Sinnbildkunst der Alchemisten", in Merkel C. (ed.), *Die Alchemie in der europäischen Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Wiesbaden: 1986) 179–200; Vun L. de, "The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69 (2008) 193–218; Carter S., *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance in Early Modern English Literature* (Basingstoke: 2011); Chiari S., *Renaissance Tales of Desire: Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, Theseus and Ariadne, Ceyx and Alcione* (Newcastle: 2009).
- 10 The opinions about whether the sexes were simply imperfect or could be combined in a 'perfect hermaphrodite' differed mainly along the lines of gender theories (Aristotle vs. Galen/Hippocrates). See, for example, Gilbert, *Hermaphrodites* 35–41. Theories on gender and procreation were manifold around 1600. As various authors have noted, concepts like Laqueur's 'one-sex-model' (Laqueur T.W., *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: 1990)) reduce the complexity of the discussions. See for an extensive critique of Laqueur and more complex narratives of the early modern body and sex especially King H., *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2013); Simons P., *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge – New York, NY: 2011) esp. 141–157.
- 11 See, for example, Brink J.R. – Horowitz M.C. – Coudert A.P. (eds.), *Playing with Gender: A Renaissance Pursuit* (Urbana, OH – Chicago, IL: 1991).

Entangled Texts

In 1614 Caspar Bauhin (1560–1624), the widely known and well-connected Basel physician, botanist, and anatomist, presented a small-scale, but highly ambitious monograph about hermaphrodites and monsters printed by Johann Theodor de Bry.¹² This volume was a typical and yet very telling example of the deepening interest in monstrosities and hermaphrodites in the learned output of the early seventeenth century. The period around 1600 witnessed a boom in publications on hermaphrodites, which followed in the wake of the mid-sixteenth-century ‘*âge d’or des prodiges*’ (golden age of prodigies) of which Jean Céard writes.¹³ Fabian Krämer has elaborated on the causes of this explosion of interest,¹⁴ which he believes was fostered by the rise of the ‘epistemic genre’ of the anatomical *observatio* and the widespread circulation of anatomical findings, as well as by an ongoing but also shifting interest in wonders in the heyday of marvels and highly prized *curiositas*.¹⁵

Bauhin’s compilation of medical, philosophical, literary, and legal discourses assembled stories taken from a broad range of texts that he cited with uncommon intensity at the beginning of the book. Assembling 461 authorities both contemporary and ancient and retelling stories from various sources, Bauhin inscribed his work in erudite European culture—thereby enhancing his own authority. Some of these sources had already been collected in Basel in the famous work of Conrad Lycosthenes, and parts remained easily and broadly accessible because of their inclusion in Theodor Zwinger’s *Theatrum humanae*

12 Bauhin Caspar, *De hermaphroditorum monstrosorumque partuum natura ex theologorum, jureconsultorumque, medicorum, philosophorum, et rabbinorum sententia libri duo* (Oppenheim, Johann Theodor de Bry – Hieronymus Galler: 1614); see Long, *Hermaphrodites* 49–75.

13 Céard J., *La nature et les prodiges: L’insolite au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva: 1996).

14 Krämer F., “Hermaphrodites Closely Observed: The Individualisation of Hermaphrodites and the Rise of the Observatio Genre in Seventeenth-Century Medicine”, in Closson, *L’hermaphrodite* 37–60.

15 Platt P.G. (ed.), *Wonders, Marvels and Monsters in Early Modern Culture* (Newark, DE: 1999); Daston L. – Park K., *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, NY: 1998); Daston L. – Park K., “The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France”, in Fradenburg L. – Freccero C. (eds.), *Premodern Sexualities* (New York, NY – London: 1996) 117–136. For the notion ‘epistemic genre’ see Pomata G., “Sharing Cases: The *Observationes* in Early Modern Medicine”, *Early Science and Medicine* 15 (2010) 193–236.

vitalae.¹⁶ By combining these old stories with new ones, Bauhin wove a complex net of spatial and temporal references that overlapped in intricate ways. The book's power lies in its capacity for combination. Bauhin offers no definitive answers to the questions raised by the phenomenon of hermaphroditism. No fixed positions are readily visible. Instead, he mirrors the myriad ways in which the figure fascinated people at his time as well as his own obsession with the topic. He stages and presents the openness and indecisiveness of the hermaphroditic figure. As Long notes, Bauhin's treatise stands out because its multiperspectivity 'gives rise to a [...] wide range of genders and even of sexed bodies'.¹⁷ Ambiguity, understood as multiple ways of perception and interpretation, is not merely the topic of the treatise; it also impressively furnishes the text's arguments and the ways in which it is organized as a compilation of very disparate findings.

The volume shows the degree of interdependence in the urban context: The impressive breadth of content relied on the well-researched exchange of case histories and books within the Republic of Letters.¹⁸ Bauhin's treatise addressed naturalists and elites alike—including those in Basel. The paratexts provided a medium for his attempts to create status and to associate himself with different types of authority, such as erudition, nobility, experience, and connections. Bauhin is introduced on the title page not only as 'Anatomicus' and 'Botanicus', citing his official competences, but also as physician to the Duke of Württemberg. Since the work is dedicated to a duke from Silesia, the first few pages construct the author of the treatise as a well-connected and sought-after expert.¹⁹ Bauhin uses his dedication to point to his long-standing interest in the topic, which he had already promised to treat in his *Theatrum anatomicum* nine years before.²⁰ Furthermore, by hinting at his collections, consisting of his botanical 'thesaurum' and other 'rerum naturalium' in his possession, these introductory pages already emphasize his profound expertise.

The appendix of images combines pictures borrowed from a variety of sources. The first image shows a hermaphrodite standing in a stylized posture with two sets of genitalia side by side [Fig. 11.1]. It is taken directly from Ambroise Paré's 1573 *Des monstres et prodiges* (*On Monsters and Marvels*) and

16 Lycosthenes Conrad, *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon* (Basel, Heinrich Petri: 1557). Zwinger is cited by Bauhin in this edition: Zwinger Theodor, *Theatrum humanae vitae* (Basel, Sebastian Henricpetri: 1604).

17 Long, *Hermaphrodites* 51.

18 For the epistolary exchange of *observationes*, see Pomata, "Sharing Cases".

19 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditorum* 3–7.

20 Bauhin Caspar, *Theatrum anatomicum* (Frankfurt am Main, Theodor de Bry: 1605) 181, 261.



FIGURE 11.1 "Hermaphrodite with the genitals abreast", in Caspar Bauhin, *De hermaphroditum monstrosorumque* [...] (Oppenheim, Johann Theodor de Bry – Hieronymus Galler: 1614). Engraving, 12 × 7 cm. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (Ld v 7).

IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.



FIGURE 11.2 "The duties of the hermaphrodites with the Indians", in Caspar Bauhin, *De hermaphroditorum monstrosorumque [...]* (Oppenheim, Johann Theodor de Bry – Hieronymus Galler: 1614). Engraving, 15 × 21 cm. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (Ld v 7).

IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.

draws on standard patterns of anatomical depiction for hermaphrodites.²¹ The hermaphrodite shown here appears static, passive, and isolated under the onlooker's gaze. Picture number four—the most striking of the series borrowed from de Bry's volume on Florida [Fig. 11.2]—is quite different in this respect.²² It corresponds to Bauhin's reproduction of Jacques le Moyne's account of the hermaphrodites' condition among the Indians, which is also

21 Paré Ambroise, *Les oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré* (Paris, Gabriel Buon: 1579).

22 Bry Theodor de, *Der ander Theyl der newlich erfundenen Landtschafft Americae, von dreyen Schiffahrten, so die Frantzosen in Floridam (die gegen Nidergang gelegen) gethan* (Frankfurt am Main, Theodor de Bry: 1591); see Teuton S., "Put Out of Her Course': Images of the Monstrous in de Bry's Illustrations of *Atalanta fugiens* and the *America*", in Long, *Gender and Scientific Discourse* 87–114.

taken from the same volume.²³ Hermaphrodites are shown here replacing 'beasts of burden' to carry the wounded from the battlefield. They are presented as active and well suited to specific tasks assigned to them by their societies, and are thus embedded in a setting and a narrative. The picture of the 'savage hermaphrodites' emphasizes the foreign locale. It thus reflects the circumstance that the ambiguous was often placed outside the realm of experienced reality in order to render it attractive rather than disturbing. Ancient and medieval imagery had situated the monstrous races at the margins of the *mundus*.²⁴ Although the search for specific cases and the meticulous recording of any hint of local occurrences were ongoing, in imagination, the figure of the ambiguous was still often reassuringly placed at the geographical margins. In the picture, the hermaphrodite's monstrosity is not obvious. In fact, it is hard to tell that the depicted persons are hermaphrodites without reading the text. Notwithstanding their visual normality, however, they are placed very far away—where their 'monstrous dangers' could not harm the authority created by their representation.

Bauhin's book thus displays a threefold entanglement: On a visual and imaginative level projections onto temporal and geographical margins combined with a focus on the local, on a level of production, the involvement of different actors (authors, printers, addressees, colleagues, and cited authors), and on the level of circulation the exchange of examples and narratives.²⁵ The figure of the hermaphrodite thus prepares the ground for a story of correspondences between far and near. It offers insights into the entangled contexts of Bauhin's book and its dependency on the imagination of being connected, of fears, fantasies, and exoticized possibilities.

The atmosphere of ambiguity conjured by Bauhin's book was not limited to an academic context, but formed an integral part of pleasure, fantasy, narratives, and identity, especially within certain elite urban circles. A particularly interesting testimony to this sociability function of the ambiguous is provided by a collection of texts assembled by Felix Platter (1536–1614)—Bauhin's predecessor as Basel's city physician.²⁶ Most probably set up as a pool of stories and topics for playful conversation within Basel's elite circles, many texts

23 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditum* 379–380.

24 Daston – Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, especially on 'Marvels on the Margins' at 25–39.

25 Krämer, "Hermaphrodites Closely Observed" calls this 'bits of knowledge', 'factoids'. See also Krämer F., *Ein Zentaur in London: Lektüre und Beobachtung in der frühneuzeitlichen Naturforschung* (Affalterbach: 2014).

26 Platter Felix, *Sammlung von Gedichten*, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, AG V 30.

assembled within the manuscript centre around highly problematic and ambiguous figures: Nuns—not unusually for a reformed context—are portrayed as nymphomaniacs, virgins as suddenly falling pregnant, and valued members of urban society are scorned and dishonoured as deceivers. None of the texts, however, deals directly with hermaphrodites. But amidst all these ever-elusive figures there is one highly alluring story about cross-dressing, ambiguous gender behaviour, and great confusion that bears detailed retelling.²⁷

The story is very close to Matteo Bandello's novel *The Page*, but uses the names from Bandello's source *Gl'ingannati*, a comedy of 1531 published by the *Accademia degli Intronati* in Siena, which was very famous at the time.²⁸ In search of better words and structure, Platter not only translated but also retold the story—and brought it to Basel. The text playfully focuses on boundaries and their dissolution by simultaneously marking and blurring them.

Twins—a boy and a girl—are separated by tragic events, the boy seems lost, while the girl remains with her father, a merchant, who often has to leave her alone. She loses the man she loves to another woman, then decides to cross-dress to act as servant to her beloved. When her brother returns he is mistaken for his sister, since her actions have been exposed in the meantime. In the midst of the events—under the assumption that he is his cross-dressed sister—he finds himself locked in another girl's bedroom and ends up sleeping with her. In the end, order is restored and each twin marries someone of the opposite sex. However, the resolution does not make this a story of ordered sexuality: The twins are constantly described as 'extraordinarily beautiful' and, most strikingly, 'so similar in size and figure that it was not possible to notice any difference'.²⁹ Their birth was difficult and resulted in their mother's death. Soon afterwards, war broke out. The twins' close similarity to each other and the problematic circumstances of their birth allude to multiple births, which in the discourse of the day were widely held to be closely connected to monstrous and hermaphroditic births—as also becomes obvious in a further image from Bauhin's *De hermaphroditorum* [Fig. 11.3].³⁰ The mix-up between

27 Platter, *Sammlung* 276–299.

28 *The Deceived: A Comedy Performed in Siena in 1531*, trans. T.L. Peacock (London: 1862); see for the play and its role as an 'archetype' Giannetti L., *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (Toronto: 2009). The same story was also used by Shakespeare for his 'Twelfth Night', see Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*.

29 Platter, *Sammlung* 276: 'ußdermossen schön, ein ander an große unnd gestalt also glich. Daß [...] kein underscheidt an inen doran mercken kont'.

30 Bates A.W., *Emblematic Monsters: Unnatural Conceptions and Deformed Births in Early Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: 2005) 18; Spinks J., *Monstrous Births and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (London: 2009). On hermaphrodites as a specific type of



FIGURE 11.3 "Hermaphroditic twins with joint backs born 1486 in Rohrbach near Heidelberg" in Caspar Bauhin, *De hermaphroditorum monstrosorumque* [...] (Oppenheim, Johann Theodor de Bry – Hieronymus Galler: 1614). Engraving, 10 × 7 cm. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (Ld v 7).

IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.

the twins furthermore confuses their bodily integrity and leads to an act of illicit sexuality by the boy, who at the time is assumed to be a girl. The story thus refers to narratives of female homoeroticism, which—under the name of tribadism—was then closely associated with the figure of the female hermaphrodite.³¹ Uncertain gender and its problematization are not in the foreground, but can be read between the lines. The story functions and is attractive particularly because gender confusion lacks obviousness.

The humorous and ambiguous undertone in Platter's text is not easy to pin down. Like Bauhin's treatise, it constantly shifts between different levels of clarity. Its ambiguous figures are portrayed as fluid, vague, and elusive. The term figure captures this dynamic, as indicated by Auerbach's definition of the ancient term *figura* as an expression of 'something living and dynamic, incomplete and playful'.³²

But what happened when the ambiguous, in the guise of a hermaphrodite, stepped out of the seemingly safe sphere of literature, the imaginary, and elite amusement? Who was in a position to see and to act when a concrete case of uncertain sexual identity appeared? Who provided the possible definitions that were needed to respond in one way or another? And who took over when an alleged hermaphrodite was detected in the very close vicinity? The following offers some answers to these questions by exploring the concrete case of Anna Jakob, its legal implications and scientific exploitation. In this example of suspected hermaphroditism, the legal and medical cases are deeply intertwined, also because the same two protagonists—Bauhin and Platter—were involved in them.

An Ambiguous Case: (Un)defining Anna Jakob

In 1609, a girl named Anna Bürgin from Reigoldswil, a little village under the jurisdiction of Basel, was held at the *Spalenturm* and called before the city's marriage court. Anna stood accused of being sexually interested in other

Aristotelian twins according to which a surfeit of matter becomes extra genitals, see Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing* 33.

31 Traub V., *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: 2002), especially chapter 5 on the 'Psychomorphology of the Clitoris'; Park K., "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade, 1570–1620", in Mazzio C. – Hillman D.A. (eds.), *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York; NY: 1997) 171–193.

32 Auerbach, "Figura" 12.

women—namely the wife of her accuser—and was therefore considered to be a hermaphrodite. Her accuser ‘pronounced her to be more male than female.’³³ The case of sexual desires and behaviour deemed illicit at the time was quickly medicalized. A case we read today as one of female homoerotic desire was directly attributed to purported bodily features and malformations, which points to the dissemination and power of the hermaphroditic discourse in the years shortly after 1600.³⁴

As usual in similar cases such as accusations of impotence or suspected rape, the city physician Felix Platter was asked to perform an examination of the accused’s secret parts. Platter did this together with his colleague Caspar Bauhin. The official report of this examination is not preserved, since the records of the marriage court are missing for that year.³⁵ But aside from Bauhin’s description of the case in *De hermaphroditorum* and an account by Platter, the case is also briefly recorded in the minutes of the small council and the so-called *Urfehdebuch* of 1609, which lists the cases in which released criminals abjured all vengeance against their prosecutors. These texts provide the reader with different perspectives on the same story, and offer a range of possible readings of the case.

Platter included the case, his examination, and its findings in the third book, *De vitiis (On Defects)*, of his 1614 collection of case histories, the *Observationum in hominis affectibus plerisque, corpori & animo, functionum laesione, dolore, aliave molestia & vitio incommodantibus, libri tres* (the 1664 English version by Abdiah Cole and Nicholas Culpeper is entitled *Histories and Observations Upon Most Diseases Offending the Body and Mind: Hurt of Functions, Pain, Or Troubles and Infirmities in Three Books*).³⁶ The ‘epistemic genre’ of the *observatio* dominates the form, style, and content of the short text. But Platter begins

33 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditorum* 346: ‘se magis virum (ut ipsius verbis utar) quam foeminam esse pronunciavit’.

34 The understanding of female homosexuality at the time was very closely associated with assumptions of bodily malformation, especially an enlarged clitoris, and therefore linked to the hermaphrodite, see Traub, *Lesbianism* and Park, “Clitoris”.

35 For a detailed analysis of the marriage court, see Burghartz S., *Zeiten der Reinheit – Orte der Unzucht: Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der Frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn: 1999); Burghartz S., “Ordering Discourse and Society: Moral Politics, Marriage, and Fornication during the Reformation and the Confessionalization Process in Germany and Switzerland”, in Roodenburg H. – Spierenburg P. (eds.), *Social Control in Europe, 1500–1800* (Columbus, OH: 2004) 78–98.

36 Platter Felix, *Observationum in hominis affectibus plerisque, corpori & animo, functionum laesione, dolore, aliave molestia & vitio incommodantibus, libri tres* (Basel, Ludwig König – Konrad von Waldkirch: 1614) 550–551. See Huber, *Observationes*.

his *observatio* not with his own observations, nor with those of authorities or colleagues,³⁷ but with a summary of the events that had led up to the court case, which he could only know about through the testimonies given by the people involved. This introduction prepares the ground for the creation and representation of Platter's self-proclaimed expert status, the result of the transformation of the court case into Platter's own medical case via the act of writing.³⁸ Platter sharply rejects the hermaphroditic explanation given by the neighbourhood, replacing it with the simple assertion that Anna was a man. By demonstrating his knowledge, Platter claimed the power to clarify and to decide. It is noteworthy that he did not feel obliged to mention the name of his assisting colleague, thereby attributing the decision to himself alone. In narrating the background to the case, Platter creates a sphere of ignorance that he used to set himself apart even more in what followed. Platter not only underlines the very rural setting, but also shows in great detail the child's misidentification as a girl and the steps by which femininity was constructed.

'The genitals had not been very accurately inspected', Platter states in a brief and devastating commentary on why the child had at first been taken for a girl.³⁹ According to Platter's account, the first step in the creation of femininity was conducted right away: The child was baptized with a female name: Anna. Platter goes on to relate how the child was dressed as a girl and received gifts common to the female gender. While the assignment of high importance to name-giving and clothing is very usual in narratives about suspected hermaphrodites, gendering, and the surrounding legal discourse,⁴⁰ the mention of the gifts emphasizes the social acceptance of Anna's status. It was not only attributed to her and her parents, who named and dressed her, but confirmed by the participation of the community, as underlined by the contractual meaning of gift-giving.⁴¹ This general acceptance fits with Anna's inclusion in groups of girls. Since everybody took her doubtlessly to be a girl, Anna dealt with other

37 On collective observation, see Krämer, *Ein Zentaur in London* 93–94.

38 For a similar argument, albeit for the eighteenth century, see da Costa P.F., "Anatomical Expertise and the Hermaphroditic Body", *Spontaneous Generations: A Journal for the History and Philosophy of Science* 1 (2007) 78–85.

39 Platter, *Observationum* 550: 'non penitus inspecto membro genitali'.

40 See on clothes, cross-dressing, and transvestism Dekker R.M. – Pol L.C. van de, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: 1989). For cases of female transvestism around Basel, see Simon-Muscheid K., "Frauen in Männerrollen", in Rippmann D. – Simon-Muscheid K. – Simon C., *Arbeit – Liebe – Streit: Texte zur Geschichte des Geschlechterverhältnisses und des Alltags* (Liestal: 1996) 102–121.

41 See Davis N.Z., *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: 2000).

girls and shared beds with them until the age of about twenty, which is marked as the starting point of Anna's desires—and of their problematization.

After stating that all this misinterpretation had become socially problematic because of Anna's inappropriate sexual desires, Platter confronts the story with his—the physician's—interpretations and their consequences. He thus inserts himself into his own narrative as the active person and the competent expert entrusted with setting matters straight. His explanation is a very simple one: Anna is not a girl, but a man. The anatomical inspection at birth—most certainly conducted by a midwife, not a doctor—is offset by Platter's examination. Anna is immediately dressed in men's clothes to signal her 'correct' gender status and renamed, adding a second first name, Jakob.

This narrative implicitly stressed the importance of better medical knowledge in situations of childbirth, and is a covert attack on the female—and in the physician's view ignorant—sphere of midwifery. In the eyes of doctors who were ambitiously working to form a medical elite, this sphere was in need of oversight and training.⁴² The text can thus be read as testimony to ongoing efforts to establish their authority by people busy trying to constitute themselves as a group with qualified medical knowledge. Around 1600, physicians like Platter claimed the expertise to evaluate potentially hermaphroditic bodies. They did so within far-reaching scientific discussions, but also in communication with the local elite, anxious all the while to position themselves as experts.⁴³ In translating the figure of the hermaphrodite into written case histories, and indeed their case histories, Basel's physicians used it as part of their efforts to create authority.⁴⁴

Platter's narrative is one not only of decision, but also of reassuring normalization. 'Normalization' is understood here not as a fixed condition or a linear development towards a somehow more scientific perception of the

42 Green M.H.: *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: 2008).

43 Traditionally, but with growing objections to its teleological impetus, these processes have been described as 'professionalization'—a paradigm that was mainly introduced by Freidson E., *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge* (Chicago; IL: 1970). The critique is pushed, among others, by Pelling M., *Medical Conflicts in Early Modern London: Patronage, Physicians, and Irregular Practitioners, 1550–1640* (Oxford: 2003). The perspective on social action and constant positioning has been much influenced by the work on the 'medical marketplace'. For an overview, see Jenner M.S.R. – Wallis P., "The Medical Marketplace", in Jenner M.S.R. – Wallis P. (eds.), *Medicine and the Market in England and its Colonies, c. 1450–c. 1850* (London: 2007) 1–23.

44 See Lüthi B. – Brändli S. – Spuhler G. (eds.), *Zum Fall machen, zum Fall werden: Wissensproduktion und Patientenerfahrung in Medizin und Psychiatrie des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main – New York, NY: 2009).

world. Instead, normalization describes ongoing and never-ending processes and efforts to render certain ideas, actions or objects acceptable and integrate them into the language of a society.⁴⁵ Processes of normalization are intensely interwoven with efforts at disentangling ambiguities. Platter was well aware that normalization is a process of definition, in which the members of a hierarchical society are involved to unequal degrees.

Platter's manuscript collection of short texts includes a poem that reflects on several normalizing processes by analysing the tension between familiarization and disgust, with familiarization being that mechanism that renders 'normal' those objects that the author actually finds repellent, leading him to praise rather than reject them.⁴⁶ The text cites examples from everyday life such as rotten, stinky cheese or filthy coins, but at the end the poem shifts to reflections on cultural differences by turning to the New World. This turn renders the text interesting in comparison with the treatment of the faraway monstrous in Platter's and Bauhin's scientific writings. Just as Bauhin's integration of De Bry's depiction of the savage hermaphrodites shows them as surprisingly 'normal' in appearance and somehow integrated into their societies, Platter worked on normalizing marginal figures—and surprisingly did so in his humorous poetry collection as well:

In Neuwer welt ist es der sitt
 Das man der kleidren achtet nit
 Gondt nachtet bloß sindt so vermeßen
 Das sy auch fleischs von mentschen eßen
 Das wir, wie auch das fleischs von roßen
 Zeßen scheuchen und underloßen.
 Drumb das wirs nit haben gewont
 Und deßenthalben underlont.⁴⁷

'Tis custom in the New World / to pay clothing no heed. / They walk around naked / and eat human flesh, / which we shy away from and reject / as unfamiliar, like horsemeat / because we are unaccustomed to it. / That is why we leave it be.

45 For a process-oriented view of normality, albeit one that focuses on Foucault's modern 'society of normalization', see Sohn W. – Mehrrens H. (eds.), *Normalität und Abweichung: Studien zur Theorie und Geschichte der Normalisierungsgesellschaft* (Opladen – Wiesbaden: 1999).

46 Platter, *Sammlung* 63–64.

47 Platter, *Sammlung* 64.

The text condemns neither different ways of dress—or undress—nor different eating habits, even including cannibalism. By incorporating them into the argument of the poem, which states that disgust is overcome by practice and familiarization, Platter normalizes the abnormal and thus reflects on the manufacture of social normality. He does not approve of the exotic in all cases, but renders it intelligible. In this way, distances are blurred and surprising analogies constructed, which can be used to understand one's own, local society better while providing, in a moment of authority, a suggestion of how things should be understood.

Platter's model of familiarization, however, needs narratives of the seemingly abnormal and exotic in order to reflect on the discursively normal. The verses cited here build on the existing vast imaginary about the savage cannibal. Presenting a way to normalize this figure overturns the narratives of the Other, which however remain necessary in order to understand Platter's argument. As in the case of the hermaphrodite, processes of normalization take place within the reactualization of existing narratives of the abnormal.

In the case of Anna Jakob, with all its local awareness of the social order that was at stake, and because of the illicitness of Anna's sexual behaviour, the situation was different to the search for ambiguities within imagination. Instead of being embedded in stories of possibilities, limiting individual possibilities was used here as an act of self-positioning, of aspiration to a position capable of making judgements. Because of its visibility and its legal, social, and sexual implications, the case lent itself particularly well to an endeavour to normalize rather than exoticize deviation.

This attempt can also be observed in Platter's case histories involving dwarves or unusually hairy people, who were very 'real' in their corporeal presence in Basel. An example were the 'marvelous hairy' Gonzales sisters who visited the city around 1590.⁴⁸ Platter tried to find anatomical explanations for their condition, but he did so by first reviving the fantasies of hairy 'forest people', which he deemed unfounded.⁴⁹ Platter's efforts at normalization needed these old stories and narratives of the faraway and their reactivation before he

48 For a detailed discussion of this visit, its dating (which differs from Platter's) and Platter's normalization efforts, see Wiesner M., *The Marvelous Hairy Girls: The Gonzales Sisters and Their Worlds* (New Haven, CT: 2009); Katritzky M.A., *Healing, Performance, and Ceremony in the Writings of Three Early Modern Physicians* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2012).

49 Platter, *Observationum* 553–554. The 'cosmographies', he said, did not mention them as they did the amazons, cannibals, Americans, and other people. In regard to their 'non-existence', see Teuton, "Put Out of Her Course" 110.

could set them aside. Once reactivated, though, it was not so easy to get rid of them again.

The ambiguities and problems involved in Platter's grappling with normalization become even more complex when we look at another potentially hermaphroditic case, which is strikingly placed in another chapter of his observations that deals with tumours. This positioning seems to deprive it of any problematic implications. In his *observatio*, Platter does not so much as mention the possibility that the woman under consideration might have been a hermaphrodite.

The case history concerns a woman who suffered from an anatomical anomaly that hampered sexual intercourse with her husband. The mysterious 'outgrowth' is described as similar 'in girth and length to a goose's neck'.⁵⁰ Platter had no opportunity to inspect the genitalia in this case because his patient would not allow it. She only let him touch the 'outgrowth', while assiduously covering and concealing the rest of the area. Platter mentioned the possibility that the mysterious 'outgrowth' might in fact be an enlarged clitoris. Surprisingly, however, the *observatio* does not touch on the suspicion that the woman might be a hermaphrodite. Platter was well aware of this possible interpretation, as is evident from the fact that he himself had clearly used the case in another book, his *Praxeos*, which had been published six years earlier, to argue against what he saw as explanations that improperly cited hermaphroditism.⁵¹

But why did Platter not take up the suspicions of hermaphroditism in the *observatio* of this case, as he did in Anna Jakob's? The case obviously took place in a different and in some ways far more private situation. Unlike in the case of Anna Jakob, which was so closely connected with the handling of sexual fraud, the social order and its understanding of normality were not called into

50 Platter, *Observationum* 626: 'excrementia quaedam enata, adeo excreuit, vt collum anserinum amplitudine & longitudine exprimeret'. As regards the high sexual symbolism of goose necks in Platter's autobiography, see Frenken R., *Kindheit und Autobiographie vom 14. bis 17. Jahrhundert: Psychohistorische Rekonstruktionen* (Kiel: 1999). Bettina Mathes discusses the broad reception of Platter's account, speaking of 'a popular topos in the anatomical writing about the clitoris'. Mathes B., "As Long as a Swan's Neck? The Significance of the 'Enlarged' Clitoris for Early Modern Anatomy", in: Harvey E.D. (ed.), *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: 2003) 103–124, at 103. The shift from goose to swan is—given the associative background of Leda—remarkable. Traub even shows that Platter's image of the 'goose neck' was cited in marital advice books, see Traub, *Lesbianism* 209–210.

51 Platter Felix, *Praxeos seu de cognoscendis, praedicendis, praecavendis, curandisque affectibus homini incommodantibus: De vitiis: Tractatus tertius et ultimus* (Basel, Konrad von Waldkirch: 1608) 213.

question. Here, the patient was the one who consulted Platter, which placed her in a much better position to dispose of the body in question. The object of discussion remained, in short, under the woman's skirts and was unveiled only by the scientist and his text. The same pattern is at work in a case of elephantiasis, in which an English girl is depicted lifting her skirts and showing her deformed legs in Bauhin's *De hermaphroditorum* [Fig. 11.4].

The sexual and legal implications of the two cases were thus in no way comparable. Anna Jakob's case was about illicit desires that were deemed intolerable, while her predecessor's case concerning difficulties in marital intercourse was not even problematized except to describe it as an inconvenient anatomical issue. The first case, furthermore, can clearly be assigned to the beginning of Platter's practice, since he concludes the story with the woman's death some fifty years later. Platter's situation as a very young practitioner also differed greatly from the one in which he found himself in the early 1600s. After a surgeon's failed attempt to correct the 'outgrowth' by constriction with thread, the situation remained unchanged. Life went on for about fifty years. Merry Wiesner has attested to Platter's 'calm and dispassionate eye, with an interest in human diversity'.⁵² The same may be said here, as he did not further expound on the deviant human body, rendering it an object with a great potential for variability.

A similar understanding of variability is also present in the detailed description of Anna Jakob's genitalia.⁵³ Although, the *observatio* explains, they were not exactly constructed in the 'normal' way, the hidden testicle was not portrayed as unusual but as a phenomenon quite common in male bodies. The anomaly of the small 'gap' was also rhetorically normalized rather than treating it as something extraordinary. This is all the more striking in a collection of medical case histories whose audience was eager to hear about the unknown, and especially within a chapter on the extraordinary and the 'monstrous'. Variability and the extraordinary come together in these narratives, forming tensions but also blurring in the attempt to perform moments of authority and to resolve struggles over normalization.

Caspar Bauhin's account of the events surrounding Anna Jakob can be described, too, as an attempt to build up authority—but it took place within a different social and textual situation than Platter's. Bauhin used the story within a chapter of 'histories' intended to explain the 'nature' of

52 Wiesner, *Marvelous Hairy Girls* 196. On the anatomical discussion about human diversity, see Siraisi N., "Vesalius and Human Diversity in *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994) 60–88.

53 Platter, *Observationum* 551.



FIGURE 11.4 "Sixteen year old girl born in England", in Caspar Bauhin, *De hermaphroditum monstrosorumque* [...] (Oppenheim, Johann Theodor de Bry – Hieronymus Galler: 1614). Engraving, 12 × 8 cm. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (Ld v 7).
IMAGE © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK BASEL.

hermaphrodites.⁵⁴ Bauhin not only contributed here to contemporary discussions about whether hermaphrodites were supernatural, preternatural, unnatural or subnatural by stating possible ‘natural reasons’, but also tried to create a model for the serious examination of supposed hermaphroditism.⁵⁵ The examination of Anna became an example, which not only showed how to perform such an examination, but also gave a clear order of the steps to take. Beginning with outward appearance, one should examine and take note of the individual’s voice, hair, beard, breasts, pubic hair, penis, testicles, and vulva. Positing these features as the ones to be checked, the text also emphasizes the rigour of their examination. This renders Bauhin’s account far less straightforward than Platter’s. Anna’s body is represented as tall but lean, the voice male, the hair female, the chin bald but with evidence of hairs having been pulled out with tweezers.⁵⁶ The genitalia were also not easily defined, which led Bauhin to the cautious statement that the body under consideration was ‘more male than female’.⁵⁷ Yet the deviation of the genitals from the ‘normal’ state of masculinity was explained in the next step as unusual but not abnormal. As a point of comparison, Bauhin cites dissections he had performed on horses, dogs, and wolves, as well as the famous Aristotelian description of hyenas, which Aristotle had used to reject assumptions about their hermaphroditism.⁵⁸

Bauhin negotiated meaning and authority through these allusions and their claims within an interregional learned community, while Platter was more preoccupied with stressing his local position and powers as a city physician.⁵⁹ Both men, however, were not simply writing scientific books, but were deeply aware of the social, legal, and political implications of the topic—and eager to make use of these implications.

54 On the early modern genre of the ‘historia’, see Pomata G. – Siraisi N. (eds.), *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: 2005). Naturalization has been discussed as a somehow progressive epistemic development for instance in Daston L. – Park K., “Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France”, *Critical Matrix* 1 (1985) 1–19. In the meantime, they have revised this earlier interpretation in various publications in favour of a more complex argumentation.

55 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditum* 346, emphasizes that the magistrate decided to conduct a ‘serious’ examination.

56 Bauhin uses and tests the categories that Long identifies as his categories or ‘signs’ of sexual difference, Long, *Hermaphrodites* 57–58.

57 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditum* 346: ‘Hinc virum potius quam foeminam agnovimus’.

58 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditum* 403–439 elaborates on the different opinions concerning hyenas.

59 For a similar argument on the differences between Bauhin’s and Platter’s herbaria, see the contribution by Davina Benkert in this volume.

Covert Returnees

Platter's and Bauhin's texts were highly authoritative and conscious of their potential to emphasize their authors' status and knowledge. This perspective alone, however, reduces the complexity of the incident of a supposed hermaphrodite in Basel and its negotiation within the city's society. Contrasting the physicians' texts with the entries in the minutes of the small council and the *Urfehdebuch*, it becomes clear that the physicians' promise of classificatory clarity was far from entirely successful in the further course of events: At first, the marriage court indeed followed Platter's and Bauhin's decision with the immediate switch from female to male attire. But the magistrate did not implement the proposed masculinity completely, as evident in the fact that Anna's name was not changed to a wholly male one, but merely extended to include a second, male, name—resulting in Anna Jakob. The name therefore still highlighted a state of intermediacy. Instead of erasing the hermaphroditic figure and assuming Platter's clear propositions, this naming highlighted the uncertainty of gender.

It is striking that, although Anna Jakob had outwardly been transformed into a man, the scribe still used mainly female grammatical forms. Particularly in their references to the *Knabenmägdtlin* or boy-maiden, the documents do not assign full 'masculinity' or gender clarity.⁶⁰ Anna Jakob was finally banished from the city and country—a common procedure that does not appear to have caused much sensation. Thus the sanctioning of illicit behaviour was achieved along with the possibility of getting rid of a disturbing problem discreetly.⁶¹

As becomes clear from the *Urfehdebuch*, Anna Thoman, the purported lover and the accuser's wife, was confined to the Spalenturm as well. She was also confronted with her errors several times and instructed to 'mend her ways'.⁶² After being sent home on 1 April 1609, the day Anna Jakob was banished, she was incarcerated again on 28 April and fined four gulden. Her husband and brother promised to pay the fine and she was finally released, but only after additional severe moral instructions.

60 *Urfehdenbuch* XIII, 1609–1611, Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Ratsbücher O 13, 3r.

61 Protokoll des Kleinen Rats July 1607–June 1609, Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Protokolle: Kleiner Rat II, at 221v. Guggenbühl analyses Basel's cases of sodomy, noting that cases involving sexual practises outside the norm often involved efforts at concealment; see Guggenbühl D., *Mit Tieren und Teufeln: Sodomiten und Hexen unter Basler Jurisdiktion in Stadt und Land 1399 bis 1799* (Liestal: 2002).

62 *Urfehdenbuch* 1609–1611, Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Ratsbücher O 13, 4v.

Thus Anna Jakob was not the only one to be criminalized. Looking at this case with the additional information about Anna Thoman, it appears far less medical than sexual and political. It emerges as a case in which the powers of social ordering played out. Much more than an individual odd body that aroused the interest of the physicians, it was the illicit relationship between Anna Jakob Bürgin and Anna Thoman that attracted the attention of the magistrate and accounted for their imprisonment. The case shows that the possible references implicated in the figure of the hermaphrodite could extend to processes of social regulation.⁶³

The story does not end here, though. The banished Anna Jakob returned to the region very briefly—an event recorded in the council minutes of 24 May 1609.⁶⁴ The case was transferred to the *Obervogt*, the high bailiff of Waldenburg. In a letter, the bailiff was ordered to capture the returnee, who was to be expelled again after three days' imprisonment.⁶⁵ This time, banishment was combined with a more visible punishment 'bey peen deß halßseysens und außshawung mit ruten'—the iron collar and caning.

This rural aftermath in the village of Reigoldswil illustrates the Basel magistrate's assertion of power over the villages and people under its jurisdiction as well as its limits, yet it was not a suitable ending to Bauhin's and Platter's attempts to embed the case in their own striving for authority. Both obscured the incidents that took place after the transformation of Anna Jakob's outward appearance—namely clothes and hair—by omitting them from their narrative. Presenting authority, which in their texts is based on decision-making power, required the illusion that implementing this decision was unproblematic. But as their attempts at disambiguation were highly dependent on the existence of ambiguous stories and imagination, the authority created thereby always remained vulnerable.

The alleged hermaphrodite was defined and banished to an undefined, distant elsewhere. Platter's *observatio* is the only source to mention Anna Jakob being sent to do military service (surely a way to ensure 'masculinity'), and locates this ending in a certain geographical area in the east, Hungary, which lends it a reassuring certainty of non-return.⁶⁶

63 For the understanding of *figura* as a concept of reference, see note 68.

64 Protokoll des Kleinen Rats July 1607–June 1609, Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Protokolle: Kleiner Rat 11, at 238r.

65 Missiven April 1609–July 1610, Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Missiven B 26, at 35r.

66 Platter, *Observationum* 551.

Conclusions

Anna Jakob's story shows that the ambiguities remained and returned nonetheless—whether in person or as stories told and thereby constantly reflected upon, disregarding attempts at concealment. Embodied ambiguities and narrative blurring served as scientific and social sites of mediation, where possibilities of defining, understanding, and normalizing were raised and tested. At the same time, it was precisely these processes that activated and kept alive the hermaphroditic figure, with its potential to fascinate through all its facets. Stories and narratives circulated through time and space, offering options for action and imagination through their attractiveness and their ambiguities.

Cases like Anna Jakob's are part of a long history of the social and cultural repression of hermaphroditism, but also of the search for often-pragmatic solutions.⁶⁷ Ambiguity was, to be sure, exploited in acts of marginalization, criminalization, and annihilation in the attempt to negotiate social regulation and convictions of normality within scientific as well as social and political discourse. At the same time, however, the fascination persisted.

The story told in this chapter concerns figures of ambiguity and efforts to mediate meanings and create authority. The example of the hermaphroditic figure reveals its capacity to capture the convergence and competition of a complex set of interests, ambitions, hopes, and fears. For early modern people, the hermaphrodite, whether as 'real' event, imagination, or dream, always referred to something.⁶⁸ But there was no agreement about what the figure of the hermaphrodite actually denoted. According to Bauhin's introduction to *De hermaphroditorum*, the authors working on the topic disagreed upon the causes and character of hermaphrodites, debating whether they were signs, monsters, portents, prodigies, or none of those.⁶⁹ Anna Jakob's case has shown

67 Against the myth of the prosecution of hermaphrodites in the Middle Ages and in search of a long history of the sometimes quite composed handling of ambiguously sexed bodies, see Rolker C., "Der Hermaphrodit und seine Frau: Körper, Sexualität und Geschlecht im Spätmittelalter", *Historische Zeitschrift* 297 (2013) 593–620 and his blog *Männlich – weiblich – zwischen: Auf dem Weg zu einer langen Geschichte geschlechtlich uneindeutiger Körper* which is available at <http://intersex.hypotheses.org> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

68 In Auerbach's understanding of figural interpretation, *figurae* always refer to other events—not in the sense of allegories or signs, but as linking 'real' historical events with their 'fulfillments'. Auerbach, "Figura" 30. For Auerbach, this reference is always prefigured in a spiritual sense, yet prefiguration is clearly not the case for the early modern hermaphrodite.

69 Bauhin, *De hermaphroditorum* 4. One of the answers Bauhin gives, which is very interesting in regard to Auerbach's *figura*, is the reading of hermaphrodites as 'an allegorical text about future events'; Long, *Hermaphrodites* 59.

that the possible implications of the figure of the hermaphrodite also include perceptions of boundaries and their violation, of social ordering, and regulation. These meanings required continual negotiation. The very indeterminateness and malleability of the hermaphroditic figure renders the hermaphrodite suitable as a 'site of mediation' where references were not simply displayed in an automatic correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm, but where questions of gender, social order, knowledge, and local authority could be addressed and negotiated.⁷⁰ Understanding the early modern figure of the hermaphrodite in this way as a site of multiple mediation, a site where openness was deployed and grappled with, captures its social potential.

In conclusion, I shall now leave the hermaphrodite and return to this chapter's focus on the broader issue of early modern deployments of ambiguity. Ambiguity features prominently in the 1623 rectorate miniature of the Basel professor of anatomy and botany Thomas Platter (1574–1628), Felix Platter's much younger half-brother [Fig. 11.5].⁷¹ The Basel rectorate miniatures were important pictorial statements of the university rectors' academic position and were intended for prestige purposes.⁷² The impressive example at hand can be read allegorically as an extraordinarily playful icon of entanglement.

The most prominent ambiguity addressed by the puzzling miniature is that between near and far. Two figures, dressed in one of the ways in which Europeans around 1600 imagined the savages of the New World, with feathers, loincloths and a bow, are placed prominently at the two sides of the central text, giving the image an immediately exotic appearance. By combining these figures with exotic as well as local birds, the exoticism of the picture is tied back to the miniature's very local context. This local nature of the *Matrikel* is underlined by its function as a document of the university's administration, which is followed by entries for the eighty-four new students in the year 1623. Two small skulls have been placed just beneath Platter's portrait. They correspond to two singing birds situated at the left and right and two putti above, symbolising the

70 There is much literature on the early modern conceptualization of the body as a microcosm. In the words of Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García, 'the body [...] was not understood as a [...] separate sphere separating the self from the rest of the world. [It] was an exteriorized reality, a microcosmos linked to a macrocosmos'. Cleminson R. – Vázquez García F., *Sex, Identity, and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500–1800* (London: 2013) 8–9.

71 The *Matrikel* is discussed by Ganz P.L., *Die Miniaturen der Basler Universitätsmatrikel* (Basel – Stuttgart: 1960) 180–181. Thomas Platter is known even today mainly for his extensive travelogue of his *peregrinatio academica* across Europe which is widely accessible through Le Roy Ladurie E. (ed.), *Le Voyage de Thomas Platter 1595–1599* (Paris: 2000).

72 Wallraff M., "Geschichte im Buch: 550 Jahre Universität Basel im Spiegel ihrer Matrikeln", *Librarium: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Bibliophilen-Gesellschaft* 53 (2010) 70–78.



FIGURE 11.5 *Peter Stöcklin, Thomas Platter's rectorate miniature, in *Rektoratsmatrikel der Universität Basel*, vol. 2 (1568–1653). Tempera on parchment, 30 × 20 cm. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek (AN II 4).*

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FIGURE 11.6 Detail of Fig. 11.5: *Hammock*.

interplay between life and death. The very structured and clear composition frames and facilitates this playful episode.

The different parts of the image are connected by a hammock, which is attached to the architecture of the miniature and functions as its floating antipode [Fig. 11.6]. The ambiguous ultimately culminates here. It is unclear whether the figure lying in the hammock is a woman or a man, whether s/he is sleeping, awake, relaxing, ill or even dead, since most of the body is hidden by the fragile fabric of the suspended resting-place. Thus its secrets remain hidden, and all the more enticing for being so. The picture conceals more than it reveals, but, precisely because of its cryptic quality, it manages to allude to some very essential dichotomies: Death and life, the nearby and the faraway, the clear and the unclear, and male and female are all cited and blurred. As the picture shows, ambiguity in its socially productive form is not simply about the negation of two-sided contradictions and binary thinking. Instead, the picture presents binary contradictions (the savage pair, local and foreign birds, death and life) and allows them to coalesce at the same time by combining them with the enigmatic hammock. This endows ambiguity with a forceful—and yet witty—‘social energy’, to use Stephen Greenblatt’s term.⁷³

The hammock operates as an icon of ambiguity. Floating and hanging amidst it all, it connects and revokes the dichotomies that the image presents. Thomas Platter’s name and portrait encircle the hammock. In this way, the miniature creates a position for the physician to mediate, one where complex discourses coalesce, thus enabling him to propose his own kind of authority. On a symbolic level, the miniature fashions the early modern physician himself as a liminal figure, an almost Tiresian *figura*, who mediates between

73 Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*.

ambiguity and clarity, near and far, death and life.⁷⁴ The striving for authority was, after all, not just about proposing clear definitions and simple arguments. Authority could build on complexity and ambiguity as well.

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74 On Tiresias as the archetype of 'dual-sexed beings' and mediator, see Brisson L., *Sexual Ambivalence: Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA – Los Angeles, CA – London: 2002) 115–145.

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Riches of the Sea: Collecting and Consuming Frans Snijders's Marine Market Paintings in the Southern Netherlands

Stefanie Wyssenbach

Delicacies in Antwerp

During his stay in Antwerp in the 1670s, the German traveller Aulus Apronius or Adam Ebert wrote about the city's food situation in his travel journal:

Zu Antwerpen lebet man sehr delicat, und ist weder an köstlichen Fischen, so das Land und Meer hergiebt / noch an Fleisch und Geflügel, an MoselWein, Muscheln und Austers ein Mangel. Die schönsten grossen See-Krebse, so gleich den Perlen-Schnecken, sind alhier in Überfluß.¹

Apronius spoke not only of the refined food available in Antwerp, but especially of the marine riches in the form of various fish, mussels, oysters, and 'Perlen-Schnecken'—possibly referring to a kind of sea snail or to the nautilus, part of whose shell consists of mother of pearl—that were available there in abundance.² By differentiating between not only the sea creatures themselves

1 'In Antwerp one lives exquisitely, and there is a lack neither of delicious fish, as provided by land and sea / nor of meat, poultry, Moselle wine, mussels, and oysters. The most beautiful large sea crabs, as well as pearl-slugs are [available] in abundance here'. Apronii Auli [Apronius Aulus], *Reise=Beschreibung / von Villa Franca Der Chur=Brandenburg Durch Teutschland / Holland und Braband / England / Franckreich; von Dünkirchen an den gantzen Oceanischen Frantzösischen Strand bis Bourdeau [...]* (Frankfurt an der Oder, Adam Ebert: 1723) 147. See also Goris J.-A., *Lof van Antwerpen: Hoe reizigers Antwerpen zagen, van de XV^e tot de XX^e Eeuw* (Brussels: 1940) 85–87.

2 In a similar manner, Lodovico Guicciardini pointed to the good and abundant food available in Antwerp in his *Descrittione*. See Guicciardini Lodovico, *Niderlands Beschreibung in welcher aller darinn begriffnen Landtschafften, Fuerstenthumben, Graueschafften, Herrschafften, Bisthumben, Abteyen, Stetten, Schloessern, Vestungen, Flecken und nammhafftigsten Oertern Ursprung und Auffgang eigentlich erkläert wirt [...]*, trans. D. Federmann (Basel, Sebastian Henricpetri: 1580) 103.

but also the waters they came from ('land and sea'), Apronius displayed his profound awareness of the 'watery realms' and their inhabitants.

The following chapter is concerned with knowledge about the sea and its waters, with food, and with cornucopian discourses. The focal point of my discussion are Frans Snijders's (1579–1657) markets, which present us with manifold marine products and which often have been termed 'fish markets'. On these huge canvases, such as the one in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg [Fig. 12.1], Snijders painted an abundance of sea creatures, among which we can identify a diversity of fish such as garfish, common sturgeon, ray, and lamprey, as well as other marine creatures like squids, tortoises, shellfish, mussels, and mammals such as sea otters and seals.³ Snijders skilfully painted all his marine animals in a lifelike manner so that the beholder cannot simply distinguish easily between the different skins, furs, and shells of the fish, sea otters or tortoises, but also can virtually smell the scene's salty and fishy odours. In the Hermitage painting, as in most of his marine market paintings, Snijders depicted his sea creatures, arranged around a massive wooden table, in such a way that some of the painted animals beneath the table even seem to reach into the beholder's space; a compositional device that further enhances the experience and perception of the painted scenery.⁴ Finally, in these scenes Snijders included living cats and/or dogs as well as one or two male figures, the sellers of these marine wares.

While the male figure on the right side of the Hermitage painting is preparing some fish to sell at the market and thus for later consumption by the customer, Snijders took his representation of marine abundance to extremes in the young man on the left, who pours diverse fish out of a copper kettle into a wooden tub, participating in familiar cornucopian iconography. This is not only a central motif that Snijders used in almost all of his marine markets, but it is also one directly related to the maritime world, since the original mythical cornucopia was a broken-off horn of the river god Acheloiüs [Fig. 12.2].⁵ As numerous Antwerp paintings attest, both Acheloiüs and the horn of plenty were popular motifs in the early seventeenth century, the latter also often shown together with the personification of Antwerp's river *Scaldis*,

3 In 1962 Agatha Gijzen already identified all the marine animals in Snijders's marine market now in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp. There are many of the same animals in both markets, see Gijzen A., "Schilderkunst, Biologie, Voedingsleer en Gastronomie", *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1962–1963) 75–113.

4 See also Robels H., *Frans Snyder: Stilleben- und Tiermaler 1579–1657* (Munich: 1989) 62.

5 See Ovid, *Metamorphosen*, ed. and trans. M. von Albrecht (Stuttgart: 2010) 465–471.



FIGURE 12.1 *Frans Snijders, Fish Market (ca. 1618–1621). Oil on canvas, 207 × 341 cm. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum (inv. no. GE-604).*

IMAGE © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG,
PHOTO BY LEONARD KHEIFETS.

the Scheldt. In a work today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625), for example, not only depicted Acheloüs as the central figure at the table, but also accorded a prominent place to the copiousness of earth and water [Fig. 12.3].⁶ In his marine markets Snijders thus also alluded to typical Antwerp motifs and linked them directly to Antwerp's 'lifeline': the Scheldt.⁷

Moreover, Snijders's large-scale, abundant, and dynamic marine markets are, overall, particular and characteristic of his own art production and, in a

6 For further examples, see, for instance, Jacob Jordaens's painting *Achelous Defeated by Hercules: The Origin of the Cornucopia*, now in the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, or Abraham Janssens's work *Scladis et Antverpia* in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp.

7 The designation of the Scheldt as a 'lifeline' is borrowed from Damme I. Van, "Scaldis geketend: Percepties van het economische welvaren van de stad Antwerpen of de genese van een handelsideologie (zestiende–negentiende eeuw)", *Stad en stroom: Antwerpse identiteit(en) en vijf eeuwen discours rond de sluiting van de Schelde*, Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis 123 (2010) 486–503, at 497, 502.



FIGURE 12.2 *Frans Snijders, Fish Market. Oil on canvas, 171.5 × 148.5 cm. Antwerp, Rockoxhuis.*
IMAGE © KBC MUSEUM ROCKOXHUIS, ERWIN DONVIL, ANTWERP.

broader context, of Antwerp's as well. At first glance, slippery, wet, and dead fish painted larger than life on canvases measuring several square metres do not seem to be the most attractive motifs. Nowhere but in the Southern Netherlands are they likely to have enjoyed such popularity. This popularity was certainly encouraged by Snijders's manner of painting these sea creatures, which makes them very appealing and interesting motifs.

The intent here is to explain how these paintings were viewed, how and what kinds of values were bestowed on them, and which discourses these paintings were entangled with. In order to gain a fuller understanding of Snijders's



FIGURE 12.3 *Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder, The Feast of Acheloüs (ca. 1615). Oil on wood, 108 × 163.8 cm. New York, NY, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*
 IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, NY, GIFT OF ALVIN AND IRWIN UNTERMYER, IN MEMORY OF THEIR PARENTS, 1945.

marine market paintings, we need not just to analyse their visual content, but also to consider the sociocultural circumstances from which they emerged, look at the context in which they were displayed, and, finally, investigate why their owners desired these works at a time when the majority of paintings in Antwerp collections still showed religious motifs.⁸ In addition to considering the aesthetic value of the paintings, I will explore their relationship to early-modern alimentary theory and practices and to experiential and even sensory knowledge of markets and their functioning. Markets were among the most important places in early modern Antwerp, and can be viewed as con-

8 For figures on the subjects in Antwerp collections, see, for example, Blondé B., "Art and Economy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Antwerp: A View from the Demand Side", in Cavaciocchi S. (ed.), *Economia e arte secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti della "Trentatreesima Settimana di Studi"* (Florence: 2002) 380–391, at 388; Muller J.M., "Private Collections in the Spanish Netherlands: Ownership and Display of Paintings in Domestic Interiors", in Sutton P.C. (ed.), *The Age of Rubens*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts Boston, MA and Toledo Museum of Art (Boston, MA – Ghent: 1993) 195–206, at 197.

necting sites that illuminate the formation of and interplay between demand and supply, consumer behaviour, knowledge generation and strategies of collecting.⁹ It is only through such multi-faceted and comprehensive analysis that the paintings reveal the tensions and affinities between representation and imagination, between their aesthetic qualities and the various kinds of knowledge they transmit. But before we turn to the markets and alimentary practices, let us first consider the historical circumstances and one of the central sources here, early modern household inventories.

**‘Un tres excellent peintre en chasses, poissons, et fruicts’:¹⁰
On Terminologies, Inventories and the Taste for Snijders**

As recent research has shown, early seventeenth-century Antwerp was, despite political troubles and the so-called ‘closing’ of the Scheldt, still an important centre for the production and distribution of luxury goods.¹¹ Painting in particular flourished, and aside from a huge export industry for paintings, there was a special demand on the Antwerp art market for local, Flemish artworks.¹²

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- 9 On natural knowledge, the collecting of natural specimens and the marketplace, see Findlen P., *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, CA: 1994) 170–179. On the role of the market and piazzas more generally, see Eamon W., “Markets, Piazzas, and Villages”, in Park K. – Daston L. (eds.), *Early Modern Science*, The Cambridge History of Science 3 (Cambridge: 2006) 206–223.
- 10 ‘A very excellent painter of hunts, fishes, and fruits’. See the caption in Bie Cornelis de, *Het gulden cabinet vande edel vry schilder const inhoudende den lof vande vermarste schilders, architecte, beldthowers, ende plaetsnyders, van dese eeuw* (Antwerp, Ian Meyssens: 1661) 61.
- 11 See, for example, Blondé, “Art and Economy” 379–391; Dupré S., “Trading Luxury Glass, Picturing Collections and Consuming Objects of Knowledge in Early Seventeenth-Century Antwerp”, *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010) 53–78; Göttler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J., “Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp: An Introduction”, in Göttler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J. (eds.), *Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 64 (Leiden – Boston, MA: 2014) 9–37.
- 12 See, for example, Muller, “Private Collections” 196. See also the database of John Michael Montias for an insight into how many Flemish paintings apparently reached Northern Netherlands collections: <http://research.frick.org/montiasart/recordlistA.php?skip=0> (accessed: 02.08.2016). John Loughman noted that ‘art dealers from the Southern Netherlands [...] flooded the Dutch market after the truce of 1608 with relatively inexpensive paintings’, see Loughman J., “Delicacies that Enrapture the Eye and the Mind’: Still-Life Painting in the Netherlands of the Seventeenth Century”, in Carvalho Dias J. (ed.), *In the Presence of Things: Four Centuries of European Still-Life Painting*, exh. cat., Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, 2 vols. (Lisbon: 2010) vol. 1, 44–67, at 54. On the special desire for ‘local’ paintings, see Honig E., “The Beholder as Work of Art: A Study in the

Among the local works very eagerly sought after and collected were those by Frans Snijders, who was one of the most successful and versatile painters of his time.¹³ Born in Antwerp in 1579 to parents who ran a thriving tavern, Snijders was almost certainly in direct contact from early on with many of the natural products he painted.¹⁴ He achieved considerable wealth and moved in the city's elite artistic circles, forming friendships with Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder, marrying into the family of the painter-brothers Cornelis (1585–1651) and Paul de Vos (1595–1678), and living in the wealthy neighbourhood between the cathedral and St. James' church where he counted Antwerp burgomaster Nicolaas Rockox (1560–1640) among his neighbours. Snijders's success as a painter is documented by the fortune that he and his wife Margareta de Vos (d. 1647) accumulated during their lifetimes, as well as by the fact that important members of the political and commercial elite such as the aforementioned Nicolaas Rockox, the merchant Nicolaes Cornelis Cheeus, and the Spanish courts in Madrid and Brussels were among his patrons.¹⁵ Moreover, period sources, for example Cornelis de Bies's book *Het Gulden Cabinet vande edel vry schilder const* (The Golden Cabinet of the Noble Liberal Art of Painting), further suggest Snijders's popularity and the broad appreciation for his works. In the *Cabinet*, which combines biographical

Relocation of Value in 17th-Century Flemish Painting", in Falkenburg R. – Jong J. de – Roodenburg H. – Scholten F. (eds.), *Image and Self-Image in Netherlandish Art, 1550–1750*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 46 (Zwolle: 1995) 253–297, esp. 267–268. See also Moran S.J., "The Right Hand of Pictura's Perfection: Cornelis de Bie's *Het Gulden Cabinet* and Antwerp Art in the 1660s", in Göttler – Ramakers – Woodall, *Trading Values* 370–398.

- 13 His oeuvre includes, among other things, kitchen, market and larder paintings, hunting scenes, smaller table "still lifes", fable scenes or concerts of birds.
- 14 According to Van den Branden, the tavern was large and well known and also frequented by artists. Thus Snijders's parents probably served many guests and had a rich culinary selection, see Branden F.J.P. van den, *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche schilderschool* (Antwerp: 1883) 673. On the importance of the culture of eating out, see Kümin B., "Eating Out in Early Modern Europe", in Kümin B. (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, *A Cultural History of Food* 4 (London – New York, NY: 2012) 87–101.
- 15 For biographical information on Snijders and his relationships as well as a list of seventeenth century inventories with his works, see Koslow S., *Frans Snyders: Stilleven- en dierenschilder* (Antwerp: 1995) 13–29 and 325, note 3. For a price paid for one of Snijders's works, see, for example, Duverger E., *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, 14 vols. (Brussels: 1984–2009) vol. 5, 58, where 'Des Fruits par F. Sneyers' was priced at 180 florins.

information with encomia to artists, Snijders is praised specifically for the skilful, lively and ingenious manner in which he painted animals and fruits.¹⁶

Today, Snijders's paintings are often labelled still lifes. But the term 'still life' is an anachronistic one; it was neither used by early-modern Netherlandish collectors and artists nor does it accurately describe the ingenuity and diversity of Snijders's paintings.¹⁷ In painting numerous natural, mostly edible, products as well as exotic and common fruits, marine creatures, and the like; juxtaposing living and dead animals, pets, livestock, and animals to eat; contrasting natural products with exotic collectable items such as porcelain and including human figures managing and handling these wares [Fig. 12.4], Snijders's paintings play with genre boundaries, with the continuity and kinship between



FIGURE 12.4 *Frans Snijders with figures attributed to Jan Boeckhorst, Kitchen Still Life with a Maid and Young Boy (mid-seventeenth century). Oil on canvas, 152.4 × 240 cm. Los Angeles, CA, The J. Paul Getty Museum.*

IMAGE © DIGITAL IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GETTY'S OPEN CONTENT PROGRAM.

16 Bie, *Het gulden cabinet vande edel vry schilder const* 60–62. On de Bie, see Moran, "The Right Hand".

17 See also Baadj N.S., "Monstrous Creatures and Diverse Strange Things": *The Curious Art of Jan van Kessel the Elder (1626–1679)*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of Michigan: 2012) 19. For a more comprehensive discussion of Snijders's markets in the context of "still life" painting, see my forthcoming thesis, *Imaginationen des Wassers: Das Maritime im Antwerpener Stilleben ca. 1610–1660*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of Bern: forthcoming).

living and dead, ordinary and extraordinary. Thus his paintings cannot be seen as mere lowly 'still lifes'.¹⁸ The diversity and heterogeneity of these paintings becomes clearer when one takes a look at early seventeenth-century probate and estate inventories left by the wealthy Antwerp elite. Paintings by Snijders are listed, for example, in the 1630 inventory of Engelbert Gilleberts (d. 1629)—to whom I will return later—as 'Een Vischmerct' (a fish market), 'Een Schotel met Fruyt' (a bowl with fruits) and 'Een Mandeken' (probably a kind of basket with fruits).¹⁹ Similarly, in the inventory of paintings from Peter Paul Rubens's collection sold in 1640, works by Snijders are listed as 'Mandeken met vrugten en vogelen' (basket with fruits and birds), 'Bloempot' (vase with flowers) or as 'ander van Vrughten' (another painting of fruits).²⁰ These probate inventories and the other legal documents published by Erik Duverger constitute a useful source for research on seventeenth-century Antwerp art collecting and consumer practices as well as for studies in material culture more generally. Of course, these inventories do not list every single object which belonged to the household, nor are they unmediated reflections of a past material reality, but rather, as Giorgio Riello has shown, 'forms of representation that are influenced by social and legal conventions and by the specific economic and financial values attributed to artefacts and commodities'.²¹ But still the inventories give us evidence of the existence of a plethora of objects, including artworks, and often also include information on those objects' owners and the physical locations in which they were kept and used. Furthermore, the probate inventories in particular are often concerned with the monetary value of objects, in the texts reflected not only in actual prices, which appear rather infrequently, but also in descriptions of shape and/or quality.²²

18 For the theoretical discussions of still life painting, see König E. – Schön C. (eds.), *Stilleben, Geschichte der klassischen Bildgattungen in Quellentexten und Kommentaren* 5 (Berlin: 1996).

19 Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 3, 187.

20 Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 4, 298–299.

21 Riello G., "'Things Seen and Unseen': The Material Culture of Early Modern Inventories and their Representation of Domestic Interiors", in Findlen P. (ed.), *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500–1800* (London – New York, NY: 2013) 125–150, at 127.

22 See, for example, the inventory of 'moveable marital property' of Isabel da Vega and Emmanuel Ximenez: Göttler C. – Moran S.J. (eds.), *Reading the Inventory: The Possessions of the Portuguese Merchant-Banker Emmanuel Ximenez (1564–1632) in Antwerp*, <http://ximenez.unibe.ch/inventory/reading/> (accessed: 02.08.2016). The inventory for example lists 'two worn-out fire irons made of iron' (fol. 22v) or 'My lord's [Emmanuel's] habit for when he takes communion, wrapped in a red tablecloth' (fol. 24v).

Between 1610 and 1650 the percentage of Antwerp estate inventories listing what are today called 'still life' paintings—and thus artworks similar to the ones mentioned above by Snijders—increased from around 33 per cent to almost 60 per cent. Hence paintings with such motifs gained in importance and value for the early seventeenth-century inhabitant of Antwerp.²³ That the taste for such paintings was widespread is further supported by the fact that these artworks, including the few examples attributed to Snijders, could be found throughout the house, not only in private or secondary rooms, but also in the more public and prestigious rooms, alongside numerous other luxury collectibles. Thus market paintings from the first decades of the seventeenth century that depicted fish, vegetable or fruit markets could be found not only in kitchens, but frequently also in the *Neercamer* (downstairs room), or occasionally even in the *Salette* (sitting room), two of the principal rooms in early modern houses.²⁴

23 Calculated from the absolute numbers listed by Loughman J., "The Market for Netherlandish Still Lifes, 1600–1720", in Chong A. – Kloek W. (eds.), *Still-Life Paintings from the Netherlands 1550–1720*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum – Cleveland Museum of Art (Zwolle: 1999) 86–102, here table 2, 101. Loughman notes that his sources (based on Duverger) were 'estate inventories drawn up after death' whereby 'other inventories of paintings, as well as inventories belonging to artists and art dealers, have been excluded'. For similar results and more detailed figures concerning the increased taste in still life paintings, see Muller, "Private Collections" 196–197, esp. table 1; Blondé, "Art and Economy" 388, table 6 and Blondé B. – Laet V. de, "Owning Paintings and Changes in Consumer Preferences in the Low Countries, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries", in Marchi N. De – Miegroet H.J. Van (eds.), *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe 1450–1750*, Studies in European Urban History (1100–1800) 6 (Turnhout: 2006) 69–84. The authors go so far as to call still life painting one of the 'big winners in seventeenth-century Antwerp inventories', Blondé – Laet, "Owning Paintings" 81.

24 Blondé and Laet have shown that around 1630, the so called *Keuken* or kitchen (room)—which could denote not only an actual kitchen where the cook worked but also a more luxuriously furnished eating room—also housed many paintings of kitchen scenes, in particular. On the other hand, many portraits and fruit paintings could be found in the *Neercamer*. Blondé – Laet, "Owning Paintings" 80, graph 5. For the kitchen as an eating room, see Honig E., *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven, CT – London: 1998) 275, note 67, and for the kitchen and its multifunctionality in sixteenth century Antwerp, see Baatsen I. – Blondé B. – Groot J. de, "The Kitchen between Representation and Everyday Experience: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Antwerp", in Göttler – Ramakers – Woodall, *Trading Values* 162–185. For markets in different rooms see, for example, Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 4, 7, 96, 148, 163, 192, 199, 236, 253, 268, 269, 283, 427 and more specifically for the *Neercamer* and the *Salette* vol. 4, 53, 180, 184, 487 and vol. 4, 383, 455. For paintings by Snijders, see also, alongside the following remarks on Van Ophem and Gilleberts, Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 6, 391

Finally, not only were paintings of dead animals, fruits, bouquets of flowers, and sumptuously laid tables eagerly sought after in Antwerp, but Antwerp itself was a very important production centre for these paintings. The city was, moreover, a trendsetter in that several distinct types of these paintings, including the garland painting and the market scenes that concern us here, were developed there.²⁵ Invented by Pieter Aertsen (ca. 1508–1575) and Joachim Beuckelaer (ca. 1533–1573), the market painting already experienced a heyday in the later sixteenth century and remained in demand for some time.²⁶ It was largely due to Frans Snijders's paintings that these motifs attracted so much attention once again in early seventeenth-century Antwerp. As a visual comparison with a fish market by Beuckelaer shows [Fig. 12.5], Snijders was able not only to build on an established tradition and an interest in painted markets with marine products, but clearly also modified this tradition.

The Aesthetics of the Marine World

As mentioned above, Snijders was praised by Cornelis de Bie for his mastery in rendering the most diverse creations of nature. This mastery certainly also attracted many of the owners and beholders of Snijders's marine markets, which, to our modern eye, seem rather more repellent than appealing. In the St. Petersburg painting, Snijders enhanced the visual qualities of the picture and thus its suggestive power by various means [Fig. 12.1]. The strikingly lifelike quality of Snijders's marine creatures was achieved in part through the painstaking rendering of a wide range of distinct colours, particularly shades of grey, brown, and red [Fig. 12.4]. The numerous fish, sea mammals, squids, and tortoises also allowed Snijders to demonstrate his facility in imitating the most diverse surfaces through variations in his brushwork: from skins that seem wet

with a kitchen by Snijders in 'de groote Neercaemer'. For the rooms themselves, see also Vandenbroeck P., "De 'salette' of pronkkamer in het 17de-eeuwse Brabantse burgerhuis: Familie- en groepsportretten als iconografische bron, omstreeks 1640–1680", *Monumenten en Landschappen* 9 (1990) 41–62 and again Blondé – Laet, "Owning Paintings" 79.

25 On garland still lifes, see Merriam S., *Seventeenth-Century Flemish Garland Paintings: Still Life, Vision, and the Devotional Image* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2012).

26 The literature on Aertsen and/or Beuckelaer is rich. See, for example, Falkenburg R., "Matters of Taste: Pieter Aertsen's Market Scenes, Eating Habits, and Pictorial Rhetoric in the Sixteenth Century", in Lowenthal A.W. (ed.), *The Object as Subject: Studies in the Interpretation of Still Life* (Princeton, NJ: 1996) 13–27; Sullivan M.A., "Aertsen's Kitchen and Market Scenes: Audience and Innovation in Northern Art", *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999) 236–266; Honig, *Painting and the Market*.



FIGURE 12.5 *Joachim Beuckelaer, Fish Market (1568). Oil on Baltic oak, 128 × 174 cm. New York, NY, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, NY, PURCHASE, LILA ACHESON WALLACE GIFT AND BEQUEST OF GEORGE BLUMENTHAL, BY EXCHANGE, 2015.

and oily, to dense furs, rough and even spiky armatures and shells, to the soft and lush flesh of the sliced salmon at the front right corner of the table. At the same time, these motifs were also an ideal arena for Snijders to show his mastery of what Karel van Mander termed ‘reflexy-const’, i.e., the art of painting reflections, in his *Schilder-Boeck*.²⁷ In the marine market every creature seems to gleam and shimmer in such a way that their surfaces reflect the colours of the other animals around them, as well as an unidentified source of light. Even where the beholder can spy no more than the eye of a certain animal—for instance just above the copper bowl in the middle of the table—Snijders

27 Mander Karel van, *Het schilder-Boeck waer in voor Eerst de Leerlustighe Iueght den Grondt der Edel Vry Schilderconst in Verscheyden Deelen Wort Voorghe draghen [...]* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604; reprint, Utrecht: 1969), fols. 29r–34r.

demonstrated his mastery of reflections and in this way also increased the three-dimensionality and dynamic qualities of his painting.²⁸ These dynamics are, last but not least, also enhanced by the juxtaposition of dead and living animals and by the two male figures. Not only the man cutting the salmon into pieces is an enlivening motif, but the cat stealing a piece of fish in front of him as well. At the same time, man and cat also allude to the edibility of the depicted foodstuffs, further increasing the suggestive power of the painting.

Playing with the unsavoury associations evoked by the sea creatures, Snijders turned them into highly aestheticized painted motifs. What is more, the expressive visual, lifelike, and also almost haptic qualities, the dynamic composition, the skilful colouring, and the sheer presence of these huge canvases evoke a pleasurable multisensory experience. The represented marine creatures even seem to have odour and flavour, and to invite touch.²⁹ This play with the aestheticization of the motifs and their apparent presence already must have fascinated the early modern beholder, who also was familiar with the multisensory quality of the body: As Sophia Rosenfeld has noted, people 'generally conceived of the body's senses in interconnected, networked terms'.³⁰ But aside from these highly aesthetic qualities, Snijders's markets, as I will argue, were also valued for their ability to mediate knowledge.

In the following, I will investigate the discourses and contexts that may have been significant for the owners and beholders of Snijders's marine markets, taking as a starting point the paintings' primary subject matter: namely, a bounty of mostly edible natural products.³¹ By taking into account both

28 For a more detailed discussion of 'reflexy-const', see also Melion W., *Shaping the Netherlandish Canon: Karel van Mander's Schilder-Boeck* (Chicago, IL – London: 1991) 70–77; Dupré S., "The Historiography of Perspective and *reflexy-const* in Netherlandish Art", in Jorink E. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Art and Science in the Early Modern Netherlands*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art 61 (Zwolle: 2011) 34–60.

29 See also Cherry, who notes 'For many viewers, a more banal form of sensory appeal probably resides in the subject matter of still lifes by association with the real things of which they were proxies. Contemporaries praised flower paintings in naturalistic terms, with recourse to the conceit that the painted blooms seemed only to lack their scent'. And shortly thereafter he goes on, 'Fruit is pleasant to look at and images of it remind viewers of the pleasure of eating it', Cherry P., "In the Presence of Things: Two Centuries of Still-Life Painting", in Carvalho Dias, *In the Presence of Things* vol. 1, 12–43, at 31.

30 Quoted in Roodenburg H., "Introduction: Entering the Sensory World of the Renaissance", in Roodenburg H. (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*, A Cultural History of the Senses 3 (London et al.: 2014) 1–17, at 6.

31 On the edible quality of Snijders's marine creatures, see also Gijzen, "Schilderkunst" 75–113 and Uytendaele R. van, "Visserij in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden", in Blok D.P. – Prevenier

the public sites that these paintings refer to—Antwerp’s marketplaces—and early modern consumer practices, I will show that Snijders’s marine markets were appreciated for the knowledge of both nature and trade that they helped to conceptualize and convey. This knowledge was not merely theoretical, acquired by reading or learning in the classical sense, but also referred to the economic processes of everyday urban life, as well as to the viewers’ personal experiences and senses. It is knowledge better expressed by the German word *kennen* than *wissen*, to use Harold J. Cook’s differentiation, and which grew significantly in importance in the early modern period, especially for the ‘knowledge’ of nature.³²

Marketing Fish in Early Modern Antwerp

Apronius’s depiction of Antwerp as abounding in heterogeneous and copious foodstuffs clearly finds a visual analogue in Snijders’s painted markets.³³ According to recent research, Antwerp indeed played an important role as a market for daily and common foodstuff as well as for more unusual foods both before 1585 and thereafter.³⁴ According to Susan Koslow, Antwerp

W. (eds.), *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 15 vols. (Haarlem: 1977–1983) vol. 6, *Nieuwe Tijd* 138–144, esp. 144, where the author notes that even seals were mentioned among the edible products of the sea.

32 Cook H.J., *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, CT – London: 2007) 15, 20. On the importance of the urban markets for foodstuffs in the formation of experiential and sensory knowledge, see also Welch E., “The Senses in the Marketplace: Sensory Knowledge in a Material World”, in Roodenburg, *A Cultural History of the Senses* 61–86.

33 It should be clarified that Snijders’s markets are not viewed here as copies of actual market stalls, just as they also do NOT show everything that was consumed in early modern Antwerp.

34 See Stols E., “Mercurius met een exotische marabout: De Antwerpse koloniale handelsmetropool in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw”, in Verberckmoes J. (ed.), *Vreemden vertoond: Opstellen over exotisme en spektakelcultuur in de Spaanse Nederlanden en de Nieuwe Wereld* (Leuven: 2002) 3–66; Damme I. Van, “Het vertrek van Mercurius: Historiografische en hypothetische verkenningen van het economisch wedervaren van Antwerpen in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw”, *NEHA-Jaarboek voor economische, bedrijfs- en techniekgeschiedenis* 66 (2003) 6–39; and Limberger M., “Feeding Sixteenth-Century Antwerp: Food Imports, Local Supply, and the Agrarian Structure of the Town’s Rural Surroundings”, in Cruyningen P. van – Thoen E. (eds.), *Food Supply, Demand and Trade: Aspects of the Economic Relationship between Town and Countryside (Middle Ages–19th Century)*, *Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area* 14 (Turnhout: 2012) 31–47.

was the most important centre for the fish trade in the whole southern Low Countries.³⁵

By a large margin, the market paintings mentioned and specified most frequently in the inventories are depictions of fruit markets and fish markets, with at least eighteen and twenty-eight entries, respectively, between 1600 and 1653.³⁶ At the same time, fish markets or marine markets are also the type of market Snijders possibly painted most often.³⁷ Furthermore, among his surviving works, the only representations of Snijders's markets that can be clearly situated in Antwerp are those few of his marine market paintings that show the city's Bakers Tower in the background [Figs. 12.1, 12.2].³⁸ Hence even if the market paintings—based on the mix of fresh and salt water fish, the sheer abundance of species, their presentation and aestheticization—do not depict actual early modern market stalls for seafood, Snijders explicitly located these scenes in his hometown.³⁹ In this way, he accorded his marine cornucopias a prominent place among all the markets he painted, and marked them visually as typically Antwerp paintings. For the early modern beholders of these paintings, the riches of the sea therefore seemed local by nature, but they could also establish a direct connection between the paintings and 'their' markets in 'their' town. Snijders used compositional devices and scale to reinforce the intersection between his painted depictions and the actual experience of the fish market. The customer of the market comestibles could also be the beholder, for whose eyes the marine products seem to be on display, with some

35 Koslow, *Frans Snyder* 138 and, similarly, Limberger, "Feeding Sixteenth-Century Antwerp" 38.

36 'Groenmerkten', probably vegetable markets, appear seven times. Moreover, unspecified markets appear several times and some other single-commodity markets are mentioned, for example a bird market or a 'Vleesraem' (probably a stall selling game).

37 At any rate they survive in goodly numbers today. See also Robels, *Frans Snyder* 194–198 and 398–400.

38 Koslow, *Frans Snyder* 138.

39 See also Koslow, *Frans Snyder* 138, 140. On the fish markets, see also Baetens R., "De lokale markten te Antwerpen (16^e–18^e eeuw)", in Genootschap voor Antwerpse geschiedenis (ed.), *Antwerpen in de XVII^{de} eeuw* (Antwerp: 1989) 169–202, esp. 172–174 and 183–184. I also found at least three cases in the first six Duverger volumes where a painting of a fish market is mentioned in relation to the city of Antwerp, which is quite unique. Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 4, 16, 'een Antwerpse Vischmerct' (a fish market in Antwerp) and vol. 6, 275, 'Een Vismerckt beneffens de Stadt Antwerpen in schilderije lantschap' (a fish market next to the city of Antwerp in a landscape painting) and vol. 6, 286, 'Een Vismerckt met de Stadt Antwerpen in lantschap' (a fish market with the city of Antwerp in a landscape).

animals even appearing to reach into his or her space.⁴⁰ The relationship of Snijders's paintings with the Antwerp market at the same time also underlines the entanglement with the city's alimentary practices.

Markets more generally were among the most important sites in Antwerp, not surprisingly for a city that fashioned its own identity as a market place.⁴¹ They were political places and shopping sites not just for edible products but also for luxury goods and collectibles as exemplified, for instance, by the specialized markets for paintings.⁴² The documents transcribed by Duverger frequently mention markets not only as sites where people lived or worked, but also in relation to the objects used there, or as sites where business was transacted, thus emphasizing their material and economic importance. We can hence call them truly connected sites where a variety of people met and intermingled with other people and goods.⁴³

Furthermore, markets were sites where information was exchanged, knowledge produced, and connoisseurship displayed. The Italian Ulisse Aldrovandi clearly related his interest in natural knowledge to visits to the local fish markets. In his autobiography he wrote: 'In the same time that [Guillaume Rondelet] was in Rome, I began to be interested in the sensory knowledge of plants, and also of dried animals, particularly the fish that I saw often in the fishmarkets.'⁴⁴ Similarly, it is reported that Michelangelo visited local fish markets to draw inspiration for his possibly first painting, *The Torment of St Anthony*, based on a famous engraving by Martin Schongauer and today in the Kimbell Art Museum

40 Pieter Aertsen already directed his natural products at the beholder in a similar way. See Falkenburg, "Matters of Taste" 13. See also the last pages of this article.

41 Around 1577, the city fathers called Antwerp 'not only the first and principal commercial city of all Europe, but also the source, origin and storehouse of all goods, riches and merchandise'. Quoted in Marnef G., *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550–1577*, trans. J.C. Grayson (Baltimore, MD – London: 1996) 3. Guicciardini, too, regarded the markets as among the most important sites in the city. See Göttler C., "The Place of the 'Exotic' in Early-Seventeenth-Century Antwerp", in Schrader S. (ed.), *Looking East: Rubens's Encounter with Asia*, exh. cat., The J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, CA: 2013) 88–107, at 93.

42 See, for example, Honig, *Painting and the Market*; and Vermeylen F., *Painting for the Market: Commercialization of Art in Antwerp's Golden Age*, Studies in European Urban History (1100–1800) 2 (Turnhout: 2003).

43 See also Eamon, "Markets, Piazzas, and Villages".

44 Quoted, including the emphasis, in Findlen, *Possessing Nature* 175.

in Texas.⁴⁵ However different these episodes may be, both present early modern fish markets as particularly suited to learning about nature.

But in addition to the sensory knowledge mentioned by Aldrovandi, the markets were also sources of information about the monetary values of goods, modes of food preparation, and the availabilities and origins of various products. The Antwerp elite must have understood their city's marketplaces as sites for the production and exchange of both knowledge and goods; this assumption is supported by the 1649 publication, in Antwerp, of the anonymous treatise *Antwerpsche Merckten, Waer in de handel van Vis-merckt, Vleesch-huys ende andere, claer ende duydelijck wordt uytghebeldt* (Antwerp Markets, Wherein the Trade of the Fish Market, the Butcher's Guild, and Other [Sites] is Clearly and Explicitly Portrayed). The book, which is a kind of 'educational manual', led Ilja Van Damme and Laura Van Aert to conclude that 'market trips had not yet been abandoned by the lettered and obviously well-to-do customers of seventeenth-century Antwerp'.⁴⁶ This conclusion is also supported by early modern household records and, as we shall see at the end of this chapter, by some of the owners of Snijders's market paintings.⁴⁷ But first let us turn to the alimentary practices to which the marine market paintings by Snijders refer.

Eating Fish in Early Modern Antwerp

Although inventories convey a great deal of information about material culture, they rarely provide direct evidence of the food that was kept in early seventeenth-century Antwerp houses, probably because those natural products were too transient and had little or no resale value.⁴⁸ A painted marine market at home, on the other hand, rendered these transient sea creatures

45 For a more detailed account of this story told by Ascanio Condivi and Giorgio Vasari, see Swan C., "Counterfeit Chimeras: Early Modern Theories of the Imagination and the Work of Art", in Payne A. (ed.), *Vision and its Instruments: Art, Science, and Technology in Early Modern Europe* (Pennsylvania, PA: 2015) 216–237, esp. 217–219.

46 Damme I. Van – Aert L. Van, "Antwerp Goes Shopping: Continuity and Change in Retail Space and Shopping Interactions from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century", in Furnée J.H. – Lesger C. (eds.), *The Landscape of Consumption: Shopping Streets and Cultures in Western Europe, 1600–1900* (Basingstoke: 2014) 78–103, at 84–85. For early modern writing on this, see Anonymous, *Antwerpsche Merckten, Waer in de handel van Vis-merckt, Vleesch-huys ende andere, claer ende duydelijck wordt uytghebeldt* (Antwerp, Jacob van Ghelen: 1649).

47 For this notion in household records, see also Damme – Aert, "Antwerp Goes Shopping" 85.

48 See also Riello, "Things Seen and Unseen" 137.

permanent, a circumstance further underlined by the fact that Snijders did not paint rotten or decayed foodstuffs. He presented everything in such a fresh, vital, and edible manner—underlined, as we saw above, by the cat stealing fish—as to evoke not just an aesthetic effect but, through the activation of the senses of taste and smell, also an almost physical perception and experience of the paintings.⁴⁹

Early modern cookbooks open a different kind of window onto the food consumed by the upper classes—and thus by those segments of society that also owned Snijders's works. In contrast to the celebration of marine creatures that we find in Snijders's paintings, fish recipes appear rather seldom in these texts.⁵⁰

Fish was eaten regularly in upper-class households, but it had also long 'been designated as a meagre and unpleasant food appropriate for fasting', as the food historian Ken Albala notes.⁵¹ Furthermore, Galenism, which was still highly respected at that time and which considered fish (because of its wetness, coldness and moisture) to some extent as an unhealthy food, most probably had an impact on elite dietary practices in Antwerp.⁵² New and different views on diet were also emerging in the early seventeenth century, however,

49 Exceptions here are the dried fish in the basket in the upper right corner of the painting at the Rockoxhuis. In painting dried fish, Snijders already points to a further step in the digestion of these animals. Similarly, Kenneth Bendiner has pointed to the 'healthfulness' and '[n]o rottenness' in paintings of markets, and has also remarked that these would serve as 'appetite stimulators'. Bendiner K., *Food in Painting: From the Renaissance to the Present* (London: 2004) 54, 56. The point that still life paintings of foodstuffs relate to bodily experience was also recently made by Sybille Ebert-Schifferer in her talk "Die Kraft mit den Augen essen: Stilleben als Vitalitätsspeicher" at the conference *Kraft, Intensität, Energie: Zur Dynamik der Künste zwischen Renaissance und Moderne*, 4–6 December 2014 in Hamburg.

50 See, for example, Schildermans J. – Sels H. – Willebrands M. (eds.), *Lieve schat, wat vind je lekker? Het Koochoec van Antonius Magirus (1612) en de Italiaanse keuken van de renaissance* (Leuven: 2007) 164–165; Braet G., *Edelike spijs en cock boucken: Een vergelijkende studie van kookboeken in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1450–1650*, master's thesis (University of Ghent: 2013–2014) 44–45. See also Marleen Willebrands "Inleiding" to Karel Baten's *Cocboeck* of 1593, which lists only 25 recipes for fish but 47 for meat and 62 for sauces, <http://www.kookhistorie.nl/index.htm> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

51 Albala K., "Ludovicus Nonnius and the Elegance of Fish", in Janssens P. – Zeischka S. (eds.), *La noblesse à table: Des ducs de Bourgogne aux rois des Belges/The Dining Nobility: From the Burgundian Dukes to the Belgian Royalty* (Brussels: 2008) 38–43, at 38.

52 Albala, "Ludovicus Nonnius" 38. For more detailed information on fish and medical/dietary thoughts, see also Albala K., "Fish in Renaissance Dietary Theory", in Walker H. (ed.), *Fish: Food from the Waters, Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1997* (Totnes: 1998) 9–19.

and 'the era's greatest promoter of fish', as Albala calls him, was probably not coincidentally a distinguished Antwerp physician, namely Ludovicus Nonnius (1553–1645), who was associated with the city's artistic circles, particularly with Peter Paul Rubens.⁵³ In his 1616 *Ichtyophagia sive de piscium esu* (Ichtyophagia or of the Eating of Fish), dedicated to Snijders's neighbour Nicolaas Rockox, Nonnius was the first to explicitly advocate the eating of fish for health reasons.⁵⁴ Particularly interesting is that he also recommended the consumption of fish to scholars and members of the leisured classes. Thus Nonnius's 'explicitly class-oriented' eulogy of fish was directed at those parts of society that could also afford to buy one of Snijders's large-scale marine market scenes.⁵⁵ Eating fish thus not only seemed to be something favourable; Nonnius also elevated fish to a nutritional source that was apparently capable of stimulating the intellect.⁵⁶ In a similar way Snijders, in depicting his marine creatures not only larger than life but also as objects of aesthetic beauty, elevated these animals to subjects worth of study, discussion, and scholarship.

Nonnius and Snijders likely knew each other through Rubens or others in his circles, and the two men may have even stimulated their mutual interest in the natural marine sciences, since Nonnius's *Ichtyophagia* and the first of Snijders's marine market paintings arose around the same time.⁵⁷ While the physician's work relied heavily on theoretical skills and required a scholarly knowledge of the classics and Latin, the painter's marine markets depended on artistic devices and evocations of practical, sensory, and experiential knowledge to capture the attention of the beholder. However, both text and pictures engaged with and testified to a strong interest in the sea within contemporary Antwerp culture.

53 Albala, "Ludovicus Nonnius" 39. On Nonnius, see Tricot J.-P., "Ludovicus Nonnius (1553–1645): Marraanse arts te Antwerpen, auteur van het *Diaeteticon*", in Koninklijke Academie voor Geneeskunde van België (ed.), *Nonnius en de 'diëtetiek'*, Verhandeligen Koninklijke Academie voor Geneeskunde van België 58 (Brussels: 1996) 251–269. On Rubens's interest in health issues, see Heinen U., "Rubens' Garten und die Gesundheit des Künstlers", *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 65 (2004) 71–182, esp. 75–78.

54 Albala, "Ludovicus Nonnius" 39. Albala further concludes that 'More often, however, Nonnius' medical opinion concurs squarely with culinary fashion', see Albala, "Ludovicus Nonnius" 42. For further information on the book as well as Nonnius and dietetics, see Tricot, "Ludovicus Nonnius" 258–263.

55 Albala, "Ludovicus Nonnius" 39.

56 For the notion of the connection between virtues and fish, see Albala K., *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, California Series in Food and Culture 2 (Berkeley, CA: 2002) 279.

57 Koslow writes that Snijders started to paint fish markets during the Twelve Years Truce (1609–1621), see Koslow, *Frans Snyders* 142.

Conclusions: Collecting Marine Markets

Among the collectors and owners of Snijders's marine markets were Jacques van Ophem (d. 1647) and the aforementioned Engelbert Gilleberts. Although the two men belonged to different social classes, had different professions and were living in different cities, they had more in common than a similar taste in art. Van Ophem was ennobled in 1625 and was a classic early 'seventeenth-century social climber' who worked for the government on various occasions.⁵⁸ He owned several estates that gave him privileged, direct access to natural products, and although he lived in Brussels he also did business in Antwerp. As Susan Koslow has documented, Van Ophem was, among other things, responsible for granting transport permits and for the confiscation of illegally imported or exported market wares in Antwerp, and around Brussels he oversaw the collection of rents for market stalls. Van Ophem was an influential politician and an apparently quite wealthy person who was familiar with how the market worked,—the way goods entered and left the city—its infrastructure, and especially its legislation. Moreover, he not only owned the aforementioned marine market by Snijders [Fig. 12.1] but also paintings of fruit, vegetable and game markets by the Antwerp painter and thus a whole series of large-scale market paintings. In all likelihood, Van Ophem ordered his market series during his time in Antwerp and/or during his first years in his new functions in and around Brussels when the market was a dominant theme in his professional life.⁵⁹

Gilleberts, in contrast, was a city cook in Antwerp and can be seen as a quite avid Snijders collector since we know of at least five paintings in his possession; among them the above-mentioned marine or—as it is called in his inventory—'fish market'.⁶⁰ Considering its probable size and the fact that Gilleberts owned at least five paintings by Snijders, the market painting must have been among the centrepieces of his collection. The close connection between Gilleberts' own profession—as a cook he must have had a very detailed knowledge of the qualities of natural products, of their edibility and

58 Honig, *Painting and the Market* 158. For this and the following biographical information on Van Ophem, see Koslow, *Frans Snyder* 118–123.

59 On the identification of Van Ophem as owner, and for more information on the vegetable, fruit, marine and game market now in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, see Koslow, *Frans Snyder* 116–118 and 123–134. Unfortunately, no household inventory from Van Ophem's time survived.

60 On the inventory, see Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* vol. 3, 187–188. On the role of cooks in early modern times, see Pennell S., "Professional Cooking, Kitchens, and Service Work: *Accomplisht Cookery*", in Kümin, *A Cultural History of Food* 103–121.

usability, and of their appearance, origins, and prices—and the accurately shown marine creatures displayed in Snijders's market paintings underlines this assumption and it was certainly no coincidence, but rather an explicit personal statement. This is underscored by the fact that four out of the five paintings by Snijders owned by Gilleberts were listed in the 'Camer op de Pletse' (the room facing the courtyard), the same room in which he also kept works by Rubens, Hendrick van Balen and Brueghel (perhaps Jan the Elder). Thus Snijders's works hung among other paintings by the most famous and sought after artists of their time, all of them, typically for Antwerp, were local artists.⁶¹ Although we do not yet have much further information on Gilleberts, the fact that he owned no fewer than five paintings by Snijders, as well as works by renowned and expensive artists, suggests that he must have been a quite distinguished cook as well.

Although markets were actually working-class spaces, both Van Ophem and most likely also Gilleberts must have belonged to those upper classes that, as mentioned above, were still familiar with the Antwerp markets. The two men were, I would like to argue, more than familiar with and interested in the markets and their natural products. They knew the market because they were actively engaged in its organization, oversight and products. They thus knew the market and its goods 'by acquaintance rather than by reasoning' to cite Cook.⁶² Just as Snijders's marine market paintings offer a multisensory aesthetic and experience, so did the real market. To know the market was also to be in possession of a deeply material and sensory knowledge of nature and its products. As Lewes Roberts wrote in his 1638 *The Merchant's Mapp of Commerce*, 'for Experience tells us that all commodities are not learned by one Sense alone, though otherwise never so perfect in nor yet by two, but sometimes by three, sometimes by four, and sometimes by all'.⁶³

It was important to be able to discern between and choose the proper products, to know not only how much a fish cost but also how it should look, smell, and feel, and these ideas must also have been familiar to Snijders, who came from a family of innkeepers. In other words, it was also a matter of having trained and refined taste. Snijders's paintings reflect this sensory knowledge associated with the market and its products, and at the same time they play with the idea of 'good taste', with 'taste' referring to both the physical sense of

61 On the local canon in Antwerp, see Honig, "The Beholder as Work of Art" 267–268.

62 Cook, *Matters of Exchange* 15.

63 Quoted in Welch, "The Senses in the Marketplace" 65.

taste, through the foodstuffs shown, and also to consumer taste, through the painting itself as an artistic product.⁶⁴

In depicting highly aestheticized marine creatures, Snijders sublimated them in much the same way as collectors and beholders did. As the beholder enjoyed the sight of the fresh and healthy looking fish, and as these creatures became worthy of discussion and study, and finally as the beholder associated these motifs with the market and alimentary discourses, they rose in value.⁶⁵ The general value of the natural products painted in Flemish market paintings is also recognized by Elizabeth Alice Honig: 'No doubt the displayed goods have value—immense value—but the power over them is always already in the hands of the buyer or the beholder'.⁶⁶ As I have argued here, the value of the marine market scenes for Gilleberts and Van Ophem certainly lay in the fact that the large-format paintings transferred a very practical knowledge of the real market and its goods into their households. But at the same time, this 'power' that Honig mentions must also have been of special importance for Van Ophem, in particular. He not only owned estates that provided him with natural produce, but also exerted a kind of a dominion over nature in his professional activities. For Gilleberts, however, Snijders's paintings were probably less about displaying his own natural riches or being able to acquire all of them than about the reference to gustatory aspects, to natural products in a chain of production, trade, and consumption. That consumption was not merely promoted by Nonnius, but also evoked in most of Snijders's market paintings through the inclusion of living animals such as cats and dogs, which try to steal some of the tempting fish. For Gilleberts, the 'power' over nature was thus more likely a transformative power such as that utilized in the preparation of meals.⁶⁷

64 Similarly, the paintings are also about twofold consumption; see Falkenburg, "Matters of Taste" 13–14. Cook further states that 'Taste is [...] something like a sense', which fits perfectly here. Cook, *Matters of Exchange* 15.

65 My thanks here for the lively discussion following my presentation during a research colloquium offered by Tristan Weddigen, Institute of Art History, University of Zurich, in the spring of 2015.

66 Honig, *Painting and the Market* 167; Honig further argues that 'The stakes here are possession and power: the urban landowners will perpetually possess that land's natural abundance' (169).

67 Cooking is similar to painting here, as Elizabeth McFadden has argued. Cook and painter both transform diverse individual parts into a harmonious whole and something tasty. See McFadden E., "Food, Alchemy, and Transformation in Jan Brueghel's *The Allegory of Taste*", *Rutgers Art Review: The Journal of Graduate Research in Art History* 30 (2014) 35–55, at 42; see also Jennifer Rabe's chapter in the present volume.

However different the beholders and owners of Snijders's market paintings may have been, they all must have shared an interest in and knowledge of the market and especially of nature, that is zoology, food or dietetics, as well as natural history in the sense of an interest in and knowledge of habitats. Although Snijders's paintings do not depict real early modern market stalls, with their lifelike and distinguishable species, their transformative power and aesthetic qualities, which suggest that the painted creatures are right there in front of the beholder, they show a truly accessible nature, one that the beholder would find at the markets of Antwerp. The nature painted here is therefore also a truly tangible, concrete, and material one, a nature whose significance and value would increase during the seventeenth century.⁶⁸

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Negotiating Arctic Waters: John Davis's *The Worldes Hydrographical Discription*

Franziska Hilfiker

In the winter of 1592, at the end of the year, William Sanderson (1547/8–1638) gave a small reception at his London house at Newington-Butts. No less a figure than Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603) was expected as a special guest. Sanderson, a wealthy merchant well acquainted with privy councillors and instrument makers as well as explorers, had a very distinct reason for throwing this party: He wanted to solemnly and proudly present the Queen with the recently finished first pair of English globes—manufactured by the mathematician and instrument maker Emery Molyneux (d. ca. 1599) at his workshop in Lambeth, and largely financed by Sanderson himself.¹

A few months earlier, Elizabeth had had a first opportunity to see the terrestrial globe (then still under construction) when she received Emery Molyneux at Greenwich Palace. This scene is reported by an eyewitness, Petruccio Ubaldini (ca. 1524–ca. 1600), who seemed deeply impressed by the event during which the globe was wheeled in, ‘covered by a taffeta curtain in the form of a dome encompassing it down to the ground and fixed all the way round by means of an ornament’.² After the taffeta veil was lifted, Elizabeth carefully inspected the globe, which was dedicated to her, and—as Ubaldini remarked with special emphasis—the Queen was now able to ‘see at a glance how much of the seas she could control’.³ On Molyneux’s globe the seas, especially the

1 The pair of globes is composed of a terrestrial and a celestial one, each measuring 62 cm in diameter. See, for instance, Wallis H.M., “The First English Globe: A Recent Discovery”, *The Geographical Journal* 117 (1951) 275–290; Wallis H.M., “‘Opera Mundi’: Emery Molyneux, Jodocus Hondius and the First English Globes”, in Croiset van Uchelen T. – Horst K. van der – Schilder G. (eds.), *Theatrum Orbis Librorum: Liber Amicorum Presented to Nico Israel on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Utrecht: 1989) 94–104.

2 Petruccio Ubaldini’s statement, which he made in a letter to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, is quoted in Wallis, “Opera Mundi” 100. The eyewitness Petruccio Ubaldini, a descendant of an ancient Florentine family, settled in England in 1562 and was well known at the court of Elizabeth I. See Wallis, “Opera Mundi” 98–100.

3 In Ubaldini’s report, the whole passage of the scene reads: ‘It must be remembered that the Dedication to the Queen has to be printed with the royal arms and its wording suggests that

northern seas and certain sites in the northwest Arctic region, were indeed depicted with highlighted accuracy. The globe's address to the reader mentions:

In drawing the northern areas of this globe we have copied with the greatest faithfulness and diligence the geographical descriptions, which have an excellent reputation, of a number of outstanding Englishmen.⁴

A waterway known as 'Fretum Davis', extending between the 50° and 75° northern latitudes, is shown in great detail. Toponyms such as 'Mont Raleigh', 'C[ape] Walsingham', and 'London Cost' flank this waterway, marking England's presence as well as its appropriation claims to this region.

The Arctic waters mattered. They mattered because they were the site where cosmographers and the financial backers of English maritime explorations hoped to find the Northwest Passage—an imaginary strait that would lead English trading ships directly and quickly from the Atlantic, via the top of North America, into the Pacific Ocean, and thereby to the diverse riches of the so-called land of Cathay, as well as to the precious spices of the Molucca Ilands. The strait in the Arctic Ocean—if it existed—promised wealth and seemed to be worth the financial investment needed to find it.

Straits: Hinges in an Emerging Mode of Global Thinking

In the course of early European maritime expansion, certain sites in the world's oceans gained particular significance, as they were highly desirable and intensely negotiated in and through different media. The competitive imperial situation led to the configuration of such maritime spaces as 'contested locations of knowledge'⁵—where the term knowledge comprises a whole

he [Molyneux] gave her the globe to let her see at a glance how much of the seas she could control by means of her naval forces. This is a fact well worth knowing'. Quoted in Wallis, "Opera Mundi" 100.

- 4 The original address on the globe is in Latin: 'Nec non et Anglicorum aliquot hominum excellentium probatissimas geographicas descriptiones in Septentrionalibus huius globi delinendis partibus summa cum fide, diligentia summaque cura incitati sumus'. The English translation quoted in the main text above is from Schilder G., *Jodocus Hondius (1563–1612) and Petrus Kaerius (1571–c. 1646)* (Alphen aan den Rijn: 2007) 41.
- 5 Figueroa M.F., "Contested Locations of Knowledge: The Malaspina Expedition Along the Eastern Coast of Patagonia (1789)", in Kontler L. – Romano A. – Sebastiani S. – Török B.Z. (eds.), *Negotiating Knowledge in Early Modern Empires: A Decentered View* (Basingstoke: 2014) 129–152.

storehouse of ideas consisting of know-how, experiences, fears, aspirations, promises, and imagination.⁶ Questions of influence, authority, and the roles of naval, trading, and colonial powers were reported and negotiated in various media via these maritime locations of knowledge.

The following chapter examines the multi-layered forms of negotiation and commercialization specifically of the Arctic Sea space mentioned in the introductory passage above. It asks how the mediation of experiences of the Arctic Ocean, experiences acquired during English expeditions, created an alluring maritime space that distinguished itself particularly through its oscillation between a realm of experience/knowledge and a realm that still existed (only) in imagination. How was the Arctic Sea discussed in England? How did it attract attention through documentation and mediation? And how was the propagation of a lucrative imaginary sea passage linked with these processes? To answer these questions, the following chapter will focus on a text that the English navigator John Davis (1543–1605) wrote after exploring parts of the northwestern Arctic Ocean on three successive expeditions in the years from 1585 to 1587. The text is not a regular travelogue or ship's diary, but more of a hydrographical treatise.⁷ Entitled *The Worldes Hydrographical Discription*, it is dedicated to the Privy Council, and was published in London in 1595.⁸ When John Davis left for his voyages into the northern seas he was already an experienced navigator who had accompanied several expeditions as a pilot.

6 I follow here Jörg Dünne's definition of imagination: 'Imagination wird verstanden als etwas, was in einer Wissensordnung zu einem gegebenen Zeitpunkt konkret vorstellbar wird' ('Imagination is here understood as something that becomes concretely conceivable in a knowledge regime at a particular time'). See Dünne J., "Die Karte als Operations- und Imaginationsmatrix: Zur Geschichte eines Raummediums", in Döring J. – Thielmann T. (eds.), *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: 2008) 49–69, at 50, no. 5.

7 Hydrography is the 'science of surveying and charting bodies of water' and deals with the measurement and description of the physical features and functionalities of salt and sweet water bodies to support navigation and other marine purposes. See Stevenson A. – Waite M. (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (12th ed. Oxford: 2011) 698.

8 Davis John, *The Worldes Hydrographical Discription. Wherein is proved not onely by Authortie of Writers, but also by late experience of Travellers and Reasons of Substantiall Probabilitie, that the Worlde in all his Zones, Clymates, and places, is habitable and inhabited, and the Seas likewise universally navigable without any naturall anoyance to hinder the same, Whereby appears that from England there is a short and speedie passage into the South Seas, to China, Mollucca, Philippina, and India, by Northerly Navigation. To the Renowne, Honour, and Benifit of Her Majesties State and Communalitie. Published by J. Davis of Sandrug by Dartmouth, In the Countie of Devon, Gentleman. Anno 1595, May 27.* Quoted in the following after Markham A.H. (ed.), *The Voyages and Works of John Davis the Navigator* (New York, NY: 1970) 190–228.

Moreover, he was an astute nautical theorist and an accomplished instrument maker.⁹ His three expeditions to the Arctic in the years 1585–87 were dedicated to finding the Northwest Passage, and were launched and funded by the merchant William Sanderson—the same man who financed the production of Emery Molyneux's globe for which John Davis provided essential geographical data, and to which this chapter will return once more in its final section.¹⁰

Ten years before Davis's first Arctic expedition, England had already sent an exploration fleet led by Martin Frobisher (ca. 1535–1594) into the northern waters to search for the Northwest Passage. However, the original plans for the expedition changed with the discovery of a shimmering piece of rock on the barren coast of what is today Baffin Island. After an analysis on behalf of the Privy Council in England showed that it contained gold, Frobisher's second and third voyages to the Arctic in the years 1577 and 1578 were mainly mining enterprises in which tons of rock were shipped back to England. The black mineral turned out to be worthless, however, and most of the investors lost huge amounts of money.¹¹ As a consequence, it became quite difficult to find new investors for further Arctic expeditions and to convince the members of the Privy Council to support these voyages. John Davis hence distanced his successive expeditions from the ones led by his forerunner, and emphasized a different resource instead: What he wanted to bring back from the northern waters now was not a (dubious) piece of rock but (genuine) knowledge about the ocean and the Arctic strait.

At the time around 1600, maritime expeditions by the ascendant European sea powers, England among them, were launched mainly to explore new trade routes to southeast Asian waters. Shipping by way of the Cape of Good Hope or westwards through the Straits of Magellan often meant a confrontation with the Iberian sea powers, which, by trading with South America and in the Indian Ocean, had established their regular shipping routes in their respective

9 Probably best known for his invention of the backstaff. See Ash E.H., *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England* (Baltimore, MD – London: 2004) esp. 163–165.

10 It was John Davis after whom the 'Fretum Davis' was named, which would—it was hoped—eventually lead to the Northwest Passage. The production of the terrestrial globe and John Davis's three expeditions in the years from 1585 to 1587 occurred around the same time. Emery Molyneux is said to have started work on the globes in the 1580s, and continually integrated the new findings that Davis was bringing home from the Arctic.

11 Martin Frobisher's mining enterprises and expeditions into Arctic waters gained huge contemporary attention and the numerous sources they provided are (in contrast to John Davis's voyages) well researched.

'spheres of influence'.¹² Because England wished to avoid such open confrontations at sea while it tried to establish stable and profitable trade routes, maritime sidetrack routes in the northern hemisphere gained more and more significance. A discussion ensued among cosmographers, expansionists, merchants, and members of the Privy Council about the probable existence of Arctic passages connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.¹³ In the specific case of the straits to the northwest of the American continent, the so-called Northwest Passage, they were pondering—and very much hoping for—the existence of a mirror image to the *fretum magellani* (the Straits of Magellan). The latter, situated at the southern-most corner of South America, represented the most important maritime hinge, because at the time they were the only known and navigable straits.¹⁴ The globe presented to the Queen by Molyneux and Sanderson—and the medium of the globe in general—made it clear that navigating a new polar route, a mirror image of the important *fretum magellani*, would not only bypass the Spanish and Portugal naval forces, but would also be a great deal faster for English vessels. As early as 1527, Robert Thorne (d. 1527), an English merchant and promoter of the Northwest Passage, had already emphasized the profitability of the Arctic route, since the distances to cover were obviously shorter due to the curvature of the earth at the poles. As Thorne remarked, in order to understand this one needed to imagine a 'card [...] set upon a round thing'.¹⁵

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- 12 The terminology is Philip Steinberg's. See Steinberg P.E., "Lines of Division, Lines of Connection: Stewardship in the World Ocean", *Geographical Review* 89 (1999) 254–264. For the Dutch as an example of an ascendant sea power that deliberately interfered with the Portuguese maritime trade vectors in order to seize their merchandize, see Claudia Swan's chapter in this volume.
 - 13 See Niayesh L., "From Myth to Appropriation: English Discourses on the Strait of Anian (1566–1628)", in Regard F. (ed.), *The Quest for the Northwest Passage: Knowledge, Nation and Empire, 1576–1806* (London: 2013) 31–39.
 - 14 Due to its geographical peculiarity as a nautical bottle-neck, its potential occupation was eagerly discussed in Spain as well as in England. See, for instance, Sarmiento De Gamboa Pedro, "Concise Narrative by Pedro Sarmiento De Gamboa, Governor and Captain-General of the Strait of the Mother of God, Formerly Called the Strait of Magellan, and of the Settlements Made and Which May be Made for his Majesty", in Markham C.R. (ed.), *Narratives of the Voyages of Pedro Sarmiento De Gamboa to the Straits of Magellan* (London: 1895) 226–351; Hakluyt Richard, "A Discourse of the Commodity of the Taking of the Straight of Magellanus, 1580", in Tylor E.G.R. (ed.), *The Original Writings & Correspondences of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, 2 vols. (Nendeln: 1967) vol. 1, 139–146.
 - 15 Thorne Robert, "The Booke Made by the Right Worshipful Robert Thorne in the Yeere 1527 in Sivil to Doctour Ley, Lord Ambassadors for King Henry the Eight, to Charles the Emperour, Being an Information of the Parts of the World, Discovered by Him and the

In the context of the expansion and the maritime trade of the ascendant European empires, such straits, be they the *fretum magellani* or the imaginary northern passages in the Arctic, figured as central hinges in an emerging mode of global thinking because they linked oceans and therefore allowed long-distance maritime travels as well as circumnavigations.¹⁶ Referring to the successfully completed circumnavigations of Francis Drake (1580) and Thomas Cavendish (1588) via the Straits of Magellan and the Cape of Good Hope by depicting their ships' routes in a fine red and blue line respectively,¹⁷ Emery Molyneux's globe, as Adam Max Cohen puts it, 'announced the arrival of England as a global empire'.¹⁸ But in order to complete further circumnavigations and, most of all, to establish stable maritime trade routes undisturbed by confrontations with the Iberian sea powers, the English had to find alternative sea-lanes and straits. The sites in the Arctic Ocean where they hoped to discover such maritime hinges and waterways to the southeast Asian trade regions thus became very important and intensely negotiated.

But what exactly does it mean that, in the course of the European—in this case particularly English—expansion, certain sites in the oceans attained significance, becoming commercialised and subject to negotiation? As the present chapter suggests, negotiation appears as a multifarious process. John Davis's explorations of the Arctic Ocean and his documentation of the experiences and outcomes of these voyages in the *Hydrographical Discription* reveal aspects of this negotiation process.¹⁹

King of Portugal: And also of the way to the Moluccaes by the North", in Hakluyt Richard, *The Second Volume of the Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation Made to the North and North-East Quarters of the World, With the Directions, Letters, Privileges Discourses, and Observations Incident to the Same* (Glasgow: 1903) 165–194, at 168.

- 16 As the cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove has suggested, 'circumnavigation [was] a critical moment in the emergence of globalism as "spatiality"'. See Cosgrove D., "Introduction: Mapping Meaning", in Cosgrove D. (ed.), *Mappings* (London: 1999) 1–23, at 20.
- 17 Helen Wallis states that 'the globe is the earliest surviving work to show both their tracks', Wallis, "The First English Globe" 283. I assume that Molyneux's terrestrial globe is the earliest surviving globe to depict ship's tracks in general.
- 18 Cohen A.M., "Englishing the Globe: Molyneux's Globes and Shakespeare's Theatrical Career", *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 37 (2006) 963–984, at 968. Several naval actions and ship raids occurred between the English and the Iberian sea powers during both Drake's and Cavendish's circumnavigations.
- 19 John Davis's *Hydrographical Discription* is a fascinating text that has received astonishingly little scholarly attention thus far. As far as I know, only two recent essays on it exist, one by Elizabeth Heale, in which she follows Davis's theological/religious arguments, and another by Mary C. Fuller, who examines Davis's treatise in the context of Richard

**'How Ridiculous this Imagination of the Seas Frying Is':
John Davis's *The Worldes Hydrographical Discription***

On 15 November 1587, John Davis returned from his last Arctic voyage. In a letter to William Sanderson, formulated in a hurry only one day after landing, he writes that the existence of a northwest passage was 'most probable' and 'the execution easie'. Davis hereby opened up prospects of future success and gave positive promises—'as at my comming you shall fully know', as he writes to his patron.²⁰ At the same time, he concedes that on this third and final voyage he had still not found a definite entrance to the straits and therefore had not yet sailed the passage. Thus, even after Davis's three expeditions, the Northwest Passage remained in the vague position between a 'known and [nearly] visited quantity' and a 'space of the credible', existing purely in the imagination.²¹

After his return, John Davis began writing an elaborated treatise concerning the site in the Arctic where the Northwest Passage likely lay and which, according to him, would be found and navigated with financial investment in future expeditions. The treatise explicitly addresses the Privy Council ('the right honorable Lordes of her Majesties most honorable Privie Counsaile'), and in its main title mentions the hypothesis Davis wanted to prove:

The Worldes Hydrographical Discription. Wherein is proved [...] that [...] the Seas [are] universally navigable without any naturall anoyance to hinder the same, Whereby appeares that from England there is a short and speedie passage into the South Seas, to China, Molucca, Philippina, and India, by Northerly Navigation.²²

Davis himself calls his text a 'treatise of the Worldes Hydrographical bands'.²³ Hence the treatise was to deal with the logic, physical properties, and flows of

Hakluyt's integration of Arctic materials into his anthologies. Heale E., "Accidental Restraints: Straits and Passages in Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations*", in Carey D. – Jowitt C. (eds.), *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2012) 271–281; Fuller M.C., "Arctics of Empire: The North in *Principal Navigations* (1598–1600)", in Regard, *The Quest for the Northwest Passage* 15–29.

20 Davis John, "A Letter of the Sayd M. John Davis, Written to M. Sanderson, of London, Concerning his Forewritten Voyage", in Markham, *The Voyages and Works* 59. The quotation in this subheading's title is from Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 218.

21 Fuller M.C., *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576–1624* (Cambridge: 2007) 21.

22 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* title-page and 193.

23 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 193.

watercourses as well as the global connections of oceans and waterways, as suggested by the possessive 'Worldes'. The main focus thereby lay on the role of the Arctic waters within these maritime circulation networks. The text is structured by a dialectical question and answer form. Davis answers 'objections against the possibility of a navigable passage and buil[t] counter-arguments for the conditions that would make the existence of the passage possible', as Mary Fuller very aptly describes his approach.²⁴ Following from the treatise's main title, *Hydrographical Discription*, the text is organized into three sections outlining 'hydrographical objections'. Objection no. one reads: 'The Northerly passage seme very improbable. [...] It is a matter very doubtfull whether there bee any such passage or no'. No. two then announces:

But if a passage may bee proved [...] the impediments of the climate (wherein the same is supposed to lie) are [...] so offensive as that all hope is thereby likewise utterly secluded. [...] It is impossible for any mortall creature to indure the same, [...] those Northerly Seas are wholly congealed, making but one mas or continent of yse.

From this objection no. three naturally follows, namely that 'Navigation cannot be performed' in the Arctic.²⁵ In the *Hydrographical Discription* Davis follows a tactic with which he could, as he himself describes it,

make profe of the certaintie of this discoverie, to lay downe whatsoever may against the same be objected, and in the overthrowe of those conceived hinderances the safeness of the passage shall most manifestly appeare.²⁶

In this characteristic style of dialectical thesis-antithesis reasoning, negotiating denotes a (rhetorical) bargaining, a contemplation and calculation of hydrographical (im)possibilities. And by verifying and imparting knowledge about the Arctic Ocean, Davis also made propositions—propositions situated within the specific discourse of sea power, maritime trade and colonial rivalry.

As mentioned above, the addressee of these propositions was the Privy Council. In his preamble, Davis makes clear that the privy councillors should follow his invitations; otherwise they—and with them the whole realm of England—would look 'incredulous, slow of understanding, and negligent in

²⁴ Fuller, "Arctics of Empire" 26.

²⁵ Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 195, 196, 197.

²⁶ Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 194.

the highest degree'.²⁷ The mention of Francis Walsingham's (ca. 1532–1590) death and the ensuing reluctance of other courtiers to invest capital was meant as an explicit criticism²⁸ as well as a warning not to neglect the colonial game and stand idly by as rivals harvested the fruits of overseas trade.²⁹ A waterway such as the Northwest Passage, which was supposed to lead quickly not only to the Moluccas but to the whole eastern trading area in the Pacific (including China, the Philippines, and India), and which was also navigable as a 'safe passage, and without offence of any', would make London a rich entrepôt, a 'storehouse of Europe', and in Davis's eyes even a 'nurse of the world'.³⁰ John Davis accentuates the economic benefits and global proportions of the use of these straits not just by mentioning the import of goods of eastern provenance that would arrive 'in the ripeness of their perfection', but also by addressing the possibility of discovering a 'copious and rich vent for al our [...] comodities of England' in the cold lands of North America.³¹ This was an important consideration at a time when England was suffering a severe decline in wool exports. The Northwest Passage, it seemed, possessed all the amenities that a future maritime and colonial power could hope to find.

With these embedded segments written in a distinct pamphlet style, it becomes apparent that the *Hydrographical Discription* was no mere treatise on hydrographical theory. In fact, it meanders between the genres of dialectic tract, propagandistic pamphlet, scholarly hydrographical text, and travelogue. By combining all these elements, Davis's *Hydrographical Discription* crosses genre boundaries and distinguishes itself from other relations on maritime themes. Moreover, the *Hydrographical Discription* is one of the earliest hydrographical texts to deal specifically with the Arctic Ocean as an empirically tested object of knowledge. It is precisely this complexity of arguments and narrative layers that makes the treatise so interesting.

Thus the text contains fragments of the accounts of the voyages, mainly descriptions of the precarious incidents, difficulties, and dangers that the crews faced on the expeditions.³² For instance, the reader learns that the sea

27 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 213.

28 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 210. Francis Walsingham acted as a generous and very dedicated investor in many of the early English Northwest Passage enterprises.

29 John Davis asks rhetorically: 'Why should we be thus blinded, seeing our enemies to possess the fruites of our blessednes and yet will not perceive the same?' Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 213.

30 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 194.

31 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 193, 215.

32 Each of the three voyages was documented by a travel account. One was written by John Davis himself, the two others by his friend John Jane(s) who travelled with him. Jane John,

could turn into a dangerous whirlpool and that the ice could enclose and crush the ships or lift them high above the ocean's surface. Constantly freeing the vessel from the ice floes around it demanded huge physical efforts from the men and exhausted them tremendously. The 'lothsome view', 'the irksome noyse of the yce' and the extreme cold afflicted the crews mentally, and complicated life in the cramped ship even more.³³ As John Davis emphasizes, these perpetually 'paynefull travells', during which the English gained insights into the icy sea, eventually led to nothing less than 'truthes [being] made manifest'.³⁴ Overcoming such dangers rendered the findings all the more precious.

Stressing the precarious nature of the circumstances in order to demonstrate his ultimate mastery of the situation was part of the rhetorical structure of Davis's text. He had to show his readers what it meant to navigate the Arctic Ocean and what a distinction it was for him, and by extension the English navy more generally, to have successfully negotiated (i.e. overcome) these waters. 'The profit generated by the search [for the Northwest Passage] was [therefore] cultural [as well], yielding a powerful national myth'—one of an England exceptionally made and (divinely) elected for these climatic and navigational circumstances of the northern seas.³⁵

A Laboratory among Floating Icebergs: Accumulating Hydrographical Knowledge

In publishing the *Hydrographical Discription*, however, John Davis sought to obtain more tangible profits as well. By presenting the Arctic Sea as an empirically tested hydrographical entity, he also commercialized it, making it comprehensible and therefore available for investments. Thus, to disprove the aforementioned three main objections to the existence and navigability of straits in the Arctic, Davis not only cites the cosmographical theories and texts of ancient geographers, philosophers, and writers. Davis counters

"The First Voyage of Master John Davis, Undertaken for the Discoverie of the North-West Passage, by John Jane", in Markham, *The Voyages and Works* 1–14; Davis John, "The Second Voyage Attempted by Master John Davis for the Discoverie of the North-West Passage, by Himself", in Markham, *The Voyages and Works* 15–31; Jane John, "The Third Voyage North-Westward Made by John Davis, Written by John Jane", in Markham, *The Voyages and Works* 39–48.

33 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 206.

34 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 200.

35 Lemercier-Goddard S. – Regard F., "Introduction: The Northwest Passage and the Imperial Project: History, Ideology, Myth", in Regard, *The Quest for the Northwest Passage* 1–14, at 10.

objection no. two, in particular, which argued that human beings could not survive the climate in the frozen zone and that the sea thereabouts consisted solely of a layer of ice, rendering it non-navigable, with the findings from his own three voyages. The fact that he and his men had travelled through Arctic waters for several weeks already proved the climate's survivability. However, under the heading 'to prove by Experience that the Sea fryeth not', John Davis additionally demonstrates the fluidity and navigability of the Arctic Ocean based on the experiments he had conducted *in situ*.³⁶ He integrated these experiments into the *Hydrographical Discription*, including a precise description of their procedures as well as their results. By considering the Arctic Ocean as an 'object of knowledge', John Davis therefore united knowledge based on experience with ideas and prospects about imaginary straits that existed thus far only in theory.³⁷

In early modern usage, the term 'laboratory' refers to a site where insights into nature were gained, where techniques of smelting, distillation, combustion, and precipitation were employed, chemical operations were executed, and trials were performed.³⁸ During his voyages John Davis built a (albeit rather rudimentarily equipped) lab on his ship that bobbed up and down between the ice floes, investigating the nature of the Arctic Sea on-site and performing experiments to gain insights intended to prove the navigability of an existing Northwest Passage. He therefore deployed precisely those methods used by early modern 'laboratory technicians': He coagulated, melted, and performed diverse trials, noted the results and even built micro-models of his Arctic environment.³⁹ For instance, Davis put pieces of ice collected from his surroundings into a vessel filled with seawater and determined how much remained under water and how much above it. Repeating this scenario with various pieces of ice, each different in size and shape, he finally recorded the result that they had 'beene seven times as much under the water'.⁴⁰ This gave

36 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 215–217.

37 Wigen K., "Introduction", in Bentley J.H. – Bridenthal R. – Wigen K. (eds.), *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu, HI: 2007) 1–18, at 15–16.

38 See Klein U., "The Laboratory Challenge: Some Revisions of the Standard View of Early Modern Experimentation", *Isis* 99 (2008) 769–782.

39 It should be emphasized that the descriptions of the Arctic experiments Davis gives in the *Hydrographical Discription* are truly extraordinary. Historians often claim that the scientific endeavours by which bodies of water acquired layers of depth and a detailed topography began only in the nineteenth century. However, the process of seascapes becoming labscapes began much earlier, as John Davis's case impressively shows.

40 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 216.

him an idea of the dimensions of the icebergs around him. Having these small vessels containing mini-icebergs on the deck of his ship whilst sailing alongside the giant icebergs must have been a singular, fascinating, and exciting moment for Davis and his crew. Furthermore, the fact that John Davis had successfully constructed a lab amidst the dangerous and ferocious Arctic Sea, rendering the environment tangible and comprehensible, was also intended to demonstrate his mastery of this new and alien ocean to readers of the *Hydrographical Discription*.

The core experiment that John Davis conducted, however, was the proof of the salinity of seawater and the evidence of the associated hypothesis that an ocean would never freeze because saline seawater, due to its heating qualities, possessed the property of dissolving ice.⁴¹ Three steps were required to prove this hypothesis. The first was to verify the salinity of seawater. Davis explains in the *Hydrographical Discription* that he used a very simple method for this purpose: He had his crew collect seawater in vessels, which they left in the sun for a few hours until they could gather the precipitation. Davis speaks of this procedure as ‘co[a]gulation’, occurring when the sun causes water to evaporate.⁴² The result: ‘Salt in great plenty as whyte as the salt of Mayo [. . .], of an extraordinary saltnes’—and it was important that the Arctic seawater was of an ‘extraordinary saltness’, because the higher the salinity, the greater were the water’s heating and ice-dissolving properties, as Davis remarks.⁴³ In a second step, he had to test the ice to prove that it was composed of fresh water. In this case, experimenting meant experiencing: Davis’s men sucked pieces of ice, letting them softly melt in their mouths. The ice had become ‘very good fresh water’.⁴⁴ In a third step, the task of observation was paramount: Crewmembers had to observe certain icebergs over a period of twenty-four hours and note down any changes. The important moment was when the iceberg turned upside down. It was the unmistakable sign that the saltwater had dissolved the part of iceberg underwater and—following the principle that the heavier piece

41 Davis refers here to Pliny: ‘By this providence in nature the sea is very salt, and salt (sayth Pliny) yeldeth the fatness of oyle, but oyle by a certayne native heate is of propertie agreeable to fire, then being all of such qualitie by reason of the saltnes thereof, moveth and stirreth up generative heat, &c. Whereby the sea hath a working force in the dissolution of yse’, Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 221–222.

42 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 219.

43 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 219.

44 One of the travelogues reports in a marginal note bearing the title ‘Yce turned into water’: ‘Before night we came aborde againe with our boat laden with yce, which made very good fresh water’. Jane, “The First Voyage” 4. In fact, John Davis was right in stating that the ice in the Arctic (and ice in general) always consists of sweet water.

always floats below the surface of the water—the iceberg turned over. Davis was able to observe the same process with the micro-models in the vessels.⁴⁵ The heating properties of the salty ocean would—and this was John Davis's conclusion—constantly melt the ice on and below the surface of the sea and would therefore make it possible to pass through the straits by ship. This obviously refuted objection no. two, which stated that the Arctic Ocean comprised 'but one mas or continent of yse [where] navigation cannot be performed'.⁴⁶ As a special culinary gift and at the same time part of his proof of the future navigability of the maritime passage, Davis brought samples of this ice-dissolving Arctic sea salt back to England for his patron William Sanderson. Knowledge of the Arctic Ocean had 'growne', Davis states, 'to a most exquisite perfection'.⁴⁷

In the early modern period, laboratories were understood as 'sites of technological venture, of knack and innovation'.⁴⁸ John Davis managed to construct such a site. Under difficult and novel circumstances, he rendered the Arctic sea into a site of experimentation. He turned it into an object of knowledge, an object of discussion, at the exact moment when he was collecting data about it, and he made it available in print afterwards by publishing the *Hydrographical Discription*.⁴⁹ John Davis assumed the role of an 'expert mediator'. In the terminology of the historian Eric Ash

the expert mediator in early modern Europe was a knowledge broker and facilitator. [...] The expert's principal [...] characteristic was his claim to mastery of some rare, valuable, and complicated body of useful knowledge that he could place at the disposal of his patrons. He served both to coordinate and oversee a given project on-site and to explain the project's details and progress to his patrons.⁵⁰

John Davis was able to bring back the collected body of knowledge about aspects of the Arctic seawater's hydrography from the secluded icy sea lab

45 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 216–215.

46 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 196.

47 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 211.

48 Klein, "The Laboratory Challenge" 774.

49 Cf. here the argumentation of Daston L., "Taking Note(s)", *Isis* 95 (2004) 443–448. As she writes at 446: 'the processes by which seeing was converted first into writing (and drawing) and then into reading, are suggestive of how nature was made intelligible by being made legible'.

50 Ash, *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise* 8–9.

to London's busy marketplace of knowledge and media.⁵¹ The terms 'expert mediator' and more particularly 'knowledge broker' stress the economic component of this knowledge mediation process. Davis brought back to England empirically acquired knowledge, which he had prepared to make usable for his patrons; i.e., he rendered it comprehensible, and expressed and framed it in keeping with a particular argumentative goal: the future navigability of the Northwest Passage. The negotiation of maritime spaces of meaning was therefore about more than merely accumulating genuine knowledge about them; this knowledge also had to be mediated in a form refined for its intended purposes, modified and to be put on the market. In the specific case of the Northwest Passage, the meeting between the sponsor William Sanderson and the instrument maker Emery Molyneux, which John Davis arranged and from which the globe project emerged, was another example of this kind of knowledge transaction. In order to recruit further investors for expeditions, one needed to know how to deploy the potential of various media. John Davis's negotiation—which attains yet again another semantic layer, that of diplomatic, economic and interpersonal negotiation—led to the inauguration of a maritime site 'that c[ould] be taken on credit, and as such c[ould] enter the economy of investment and speculation'.⁵²

However, playing with the status of the Northwest Passage as something still 'to be discovered', with its status as a 'middle category' between 'the known' and the (im)possible, was an integral part of this interest-led process of negotiating and brokering the Arctic Sea.⁵³ The retention of information and the suggestion of the possible existence of further knowledge made the project even more promising and exclusive. Likewise, it gave more power to the 'expert mediator' within this framework of negotiation. 'I doe not in this treatis discover my ful knowledge [...] yet whensoever it shall please your honours to command, I will [...] make the full certainty thereof knowne unto your honours', John Davis writes in the *Hydrographical Discription*.⁵⁴

Knowledge about the Arctic Sea was as variable as the icy sea itself—which found itself constantly alternating between freezing and melting—always hallmarked by a certain ambiguity. It was precisely this middle position

51 See Maurice Crosland, who emphasizes that 'the most basic feature of a laboratory is isolation from the everyday world' from where its findings were brought to the 'fluctuations of the market place'. Crosland M., "Early Laboratories c. 1600–c. 1800 and the Location of Experimental Science", *Annals of Science* 62 (2005) 233–253, at 239.

52 Niayesh, "From Myth to Appropriation" 34.

53 Fuller, *Voyages in Print* 21.

54 Davis, *Hydrographical Discription* 194.

between a partly 'visited' and at the same time unknown and not completely navigated 'quantity'—pointing to promises that lay in the future and therefore signalled a 'space of the credible' worthy of credit—that distinguished the discursive negotiation of the Arctic Sea and the Northwest Passage.⁵⁵ Or, as Sophie Lemerrier-Goddard and Frédéric Regard put it: As a 'protean, paradoxical object, [...] the Passage owed its [...] fascination [notably] to the fact that it proved [so] difficult to be installed as a fixed monument of collective knowledge and memory'.⁵⁶

Mediating Maritime Sites in Times of European Expansion

The maritime spaces negotiated in the course of early European expansion were utterly real sites experienced by explorers, which contributed to the body of experience and knowledge of the early modern sea powers, and represented at the same time a huge potential for projections and imaginations. They were the sites of hopes, expectations and ideas; sites where meanings were condensed.⁵⁷ In the context of maritime explorations and efforts by the ascending sea and colonial powers to steward certain straits and sea-lanes,⁵⁸ it was important for the empires to publicize both their endeavours and the meanings of the sea spaces—and this meant bringing them to the media marketplace through travel accounts, navigational tracts, hydrographical writings, maps, and globes. These were the 'material objects' of the voyages of exploration.

As I hope to have shown, this process of mediation and negotiation emerged from and was fostered by the particular constellation of colonial and maritime economic rivalries. Thus it was the hope and the search for new routes, for straits that would make it possible to bypass or even surpass the competitor, that (often in the first place) provided the incentive to think (up) and explore novel maritime sites. The competitive environment functioned as an impetus. The connection between a particular empire and the particular maritime site it was searching for resulted in the formation and branding of a specific

55 Fuller, *Voyages in Print* 21.

56 Lemerrier-Goddard – Regard, "Introduction" 10.

57 Burghartz S., "Apocalyptic Times in a World without End: The Straits of Magellan Around 1600", in Puff H. – Strasser U. – Wild C. (eds.), *Cultures of Communication, Theology of Media* (Toronto: 2016) 239–261.

58 For the thesis that bodies of water, straits and sea-lanes could not be possessed but only (temporarily) stewarded, see Steinberg, "Lines of Division".

naval identity. John Davis's *Hydrographical Discription* also emerged from this expansionary competition. Davis specifically propagated the knowledge that he had accumulated as proof of the (leading) English role in the demanding (arctic) seafaring business as well as the colonial trade sector. The scientific lab he had established on the frozen sea was therefore also a 'laboratory where English identities could be fashioned and tested'.⁵⁹ Media played an important part in this task of self-fashioning, as confirmed by the *Hydrographical Discription* and the fact that the information it offered circulated as far as Emery Molyneux's terrestrial globe. Moreover, both media functioned as instruments of propaganda addressed to Elizabeth I and her Privy Council, which were intended to fire English ambitions for further imperial expansion. Moreover, Emery Molyneux's globe in particular holds a political significance that transcended England's borders. As Jerry Brotton puts it, 'the terrestrial globe became a particularly appropriate object with which to lay claim to far-flung territories. [...] The globe as an abiding symbol of imperial authority [possessed a very] powerful iconography'.⁶⁰ All of these aspects—the self-fashioning, the propagandistic invigoration of maritime expansion, and the announcement of this intended expansion—become apparent in the scene described by Petruccio Ubaldini, in which Queen Elizabeth bows over Emery Molyneux's globe and is apparently able to discern 'at a glance [which] seas she could control'. The significance of this event for other maritime rivals is mirrored in the apposition, in Ubaldini's report addressed to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, that 'this [was] a fact well worth knowing'.⁶¹

It is, however, not sufficient to locate the roots of Emery Molyneux's terrestrial globe solely in the entanglement of imperial competition and fierce rivalry. This particular globe, developed and manufactured in an environment of cooperation, is an example of the collaborative mediation and commercialization of a maritime space of meaning. At the time when Molyneux constructed the globe (with the intellectual help of John Davis's knowledge and the financial help of William Sanderson) at his workshop in Lambeth,

59 Lemercier-Goddard – Regard, "Introduction" 12.

60 Brotton J., "Terrestrial Globalism: Mapping the Globe in Early Modern Europe", in Cosgrove, *Mappings* 71–89, at 81.

61 See page 1 and footnotes 2 and 3 of this chapter. Petruccio Ubaldini's role is not entirely clear. Did he act as a kind of diplomat? Was he a spy? Or did he play both roles at the same time? Helen Wallis states that 'the duke had sent as an emissary to London in 1591 a certain Francesco Parola, and Ubaldini [at this time resident in England] took the opportunity of escorting Parola'. 'Evidently Ubaldini believed the Grand Duke might be a prospective buyer [of the globes]', Wallis continues. See Wallis, "Opera Mundi" 99.

the Dutch-Flemish cartographer Jodocus Hondius (1563–1612) was staying in London. He was asked to contribute his skilled services to the project of the so-called first English globe, and eventually worked as its chief engraver. At this point, the project of the ‘first English globe’ already reveals its origins in the actions of a decidedly cross-border network of people with expert knowledge and a willingness to invest.

Then, sometime between 1596 and 1597, about five years after the globe’s publication in London, Emery Molyneux relocated to Amsterdam.⁶² In all probability he took the gores of the globe with him. Molyneux was not able to realize a further globe project, however, because he died rather soon afterwards, in 1598 or 1599. Nevertheless, a second edition of the terrestrial globe was produced by Jodocus Hondius, the engraver, who had returned to the Netherlands in the meantime and also lived in Amsterdam. Molyneux must have given him the gores before he died.⁶³ This second edition, which came on the market in 1603, incorporated just a few changes. The area of the Arctic Ocean was still depicted with exceeding accuracy, but no longer only the northwestern part. The northeastern Arctic Ocean was now also delineated in detail; the site where the Dutch, for their part, hoped to find a *northeast* passage. The data that allowed for the globe’s revision and this exact depiction of the northeastern Arctic Sea was delivered by an important Dutch expedition, conducted by Willem Barents (1550–1597) in 1596, which in matters of collecting geographical information was very much the equal of John Davis’s voyage. For this situation of competition around 1600, not just the English but also the newly ascendant Dutch sea power was searching for further straits and waterways that would lead them quickly to the Spice Islands, beyond their rivals’ spheres of influence.

This second edition of the globe, issued in Amsterdam, thus accessed empirical knowledge of English and Dutch origin, and represented in updated form

62 Scholars mention two main reasons for his emigration. First, he wished to advertise the globes outside of England on the European continent (smaller and cheaper versions already existed at this time, which he probably wanted to sell). See Crinò A.M. – Wallis H.M., “New Researches on the Molyneux Globes”, *Der Globusfreund* 35–37 (1987) 11–20, at 15. Secondly, Molyneux received a commission from the Dutch government to construct a cannon: ‘That he [Molyneux] emigrated to the Netherlands [...] is proved by a ten years’ privilege he received on 26 January 1598 from the States General in Amsterdam for the invention of a cannon (a demiculverin)’, Wallis H.M., “Further Light on the Molyneux Globes”, *The Geographical Journal* 121 (1955) 304–311, at 307.

63 Helen Wallis assumes that Molyneux sold the gores to Hondius. See Wallis, “Further Light” 308.

the advancing common expansion of the northern European, Protestant sea powers, pictured as parallel in the northern hemisphere (in the Arctic west and the Arctic east). Therefore, in one interpretation, the globe reflected the new sea powers' spatial alliance in the Arctic Ocean, visibly challenging Spain and Portugal's previous omnipotence on the seas. However, by incorporating data from Barents's discoveries and thereby also taking account of Dutch achievements in the first English globe, one could also argue that Hondius was directing a provocative message at the English and their claims to be exceptionally well suited and (divinely) elected for these northern seas, since he demonstrated that Dutch mariners, too, were perfectly able to negotiate the novel and perilous icy waters.

Hence both of the globe's editions emerged out of a particular and decidedly complex situation of entangled competition and collaboration, which, as is suggested here, often formed the basis of the mediation and commercialization of newly arrived colonial, geographical, and hydrographical knowledge. This chapter has shown that the exploration of Arctic hydrography and geography and its negotiation in and through different media was also positively stimulated by imperial rivalries and competition at sea. At the same time, the mediation of these maritime spaces can also be read in part as a cooperative, trans-imperial project, one that, in the specific case of the globe made by Molyneux and Hondius, linked the cities of London and Amsterdam.

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Fortunes at Sea: Mediated Goods and Dutch Trade, Circa 1600*

Claudia Swan

Consider the ubiquity of European ships in the early modern era. Ships outfitted for transport and to gratify commercial interests, imperial zeal, and military aims traversed oceans, sailed straits, and navigated rivers across the globe. As a vehicle, the ship enjoys an extensive history, and in the early modern era, technical advances and interest in establishing European presence far afield of the Mediterranean motivated the construction of increasingly complex mechanisms, which enabled new itineraries across the globe. In the sixteenth century, Spanish and Portuguese fleets explored new worlds east and west; flotillas and armadas massed to engage foes. In the seventeenth century, state-sponsored companies supported the construction and voyages of fleets from the Netherlands, England, and France that traversed the Indian and Atlantic Oceans; and the grim, wide-reaching slave trade emerged in this era and depended on merchant ships. Ranging from enormous vessels with populous crews, such as those of the Dutch and English and French East and West India Companies, to simple dinghies and horse-drawn passenger boats across the European continent, ships were everywhere, and the most complex of their time were vehicles of astonishment, castles of the sea. In the late seventeenth century, a German pastor aboard a Dutch ship wrote of ‘our ship, which seemed more a castle than a ship; those who had never seen anything like it were utterly amazed by such a structure and stared, their eyes almost glued to it—as the saying goes, like a cow faced with a new gate.’¹ Diego García de

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1 Hoffmann Johann Christian, *Ost-Indianische Voyage; Oder eigentliches Verzeichnüs [...]* (Kassel, Johann Friedrich Hertzog: 1680) 11: ‘[...] unser Schiff, welches mehr ein Kasteel, dan

Palacio, author of a nautical instruction manual, compared a sailing vessel to the human body:

this machine or labyrinth that we know of as a ship [...] seems to me the perfect semblance of a man... because its hull is like the body: the rigging and cords, like the nerves; the sails, like the many little flaps of skin and tendons in the body; the main hatch like the mouth. The ship also has a belly and related organs to purge and clean itself, like those a man has; the people [on board] are like the soul, the principal officers are like the governing faculties [of the soul].²

That a ship, the vessel of early modern global expansion, could sustain comparison with the most highly regarded creation of God as in de Palacio's 1587 *Instrucción nautical* is only one indication of the significance of ships in the early modern landscape—metaphorical and actual.

As for images of ships, it is no exaggeration to state that the early modern pictorial field is a sea of them, especially in the Netherlands, where the seafaring success of the young Dutch Republic was avidly commemorated in pictorial records of the vessels responsible for their success in trade and war alike.³ The series of ten prints of *Sailing Vessels* issued in the 1560s by the great Antwerp publisher Hieronymus Cock—by Frans Huys after designs by Pieter Bruegel the Elder [Fig. 14.1]—set a precedent amplified by an astonishing number of marine pictures and seascapes produced in the Netherlands after 1600 [Fig. 14.2]. From images of tranquil harbours to turbulent evocations of ships caught in terrifying squalls, and across media from prints to paintings and from pen paintings to luxury objects, depictions of ships came to

ein Schiff zu seyn schiene, die nun dergleichen niemehr gesehen, verwunderten sich über ein solch Gebäw zum höchsten und sahen es mit fast unverrückten Augen, und, wie man sagt, ein Kuh ein neu Thor an'. I first encountered this text as it is cited in Gelder R. van, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC (1600–1800)* (Nijmegen: 1997) 150; for assistance translating it I am very grateful to Jon Swan and Linda B. Parshall.

2 García de Palacio Diego, *Instrucción náutica para navegar* (Mexico City, Casa de Pedro Orcharte: 1587) fol. 87. Quoted by Pérez-Malaína P.E., *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. C.R. Phillips (Baltimore, MD: 1998) 65.

3 On Dutch marine painting generally, see Bol L.J., *Die holländische Marinemalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Braunschweig: 1973); Russell M., *Visions of the Sea: Hendrick C. Vroom and the Origins of Dutch Marine Painting* (Leiden: 1983); Giltaij J. – Kelch J., *Praise of Ships and the Sea: The Dutch Marine Painters of the Seventeenth Century* (Rotterdam – Berlin: 1997).

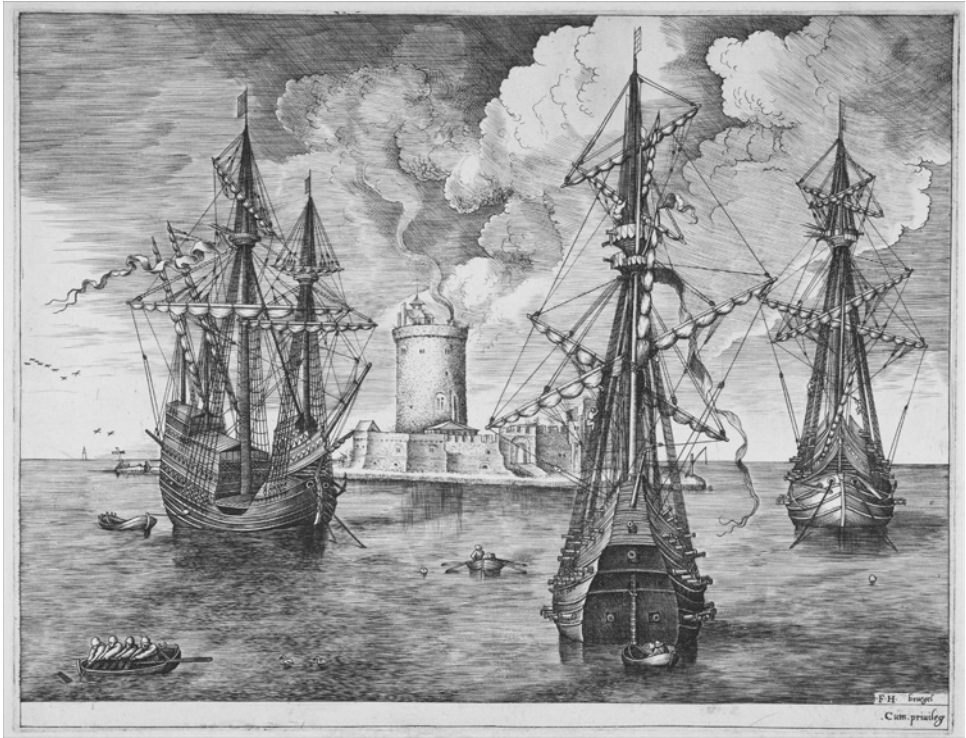


FIGURE 14.1 *Frans Huys after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Four-master and Two Three-masters Anchored near a Fortified Island, from the Sailing Vessels (Antwerp, Hieronymus Cock: 1561–1565). Engraving and etching, first state of three, plate: 22.5 × 29.4 cm, sheet: 27.8 × 33 cm. New York, NY, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. no. 59.534.23).*

IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, NY,
BEQUEST OF ALEXANDRINE SINSHEIMER, 1959.

represent a new mode of mediating, experiencing, and understanding the world [Figs. 14.3, 14.4].⁴

The Dutch painter and printmaker Reinier Nooms (1623–1664), also known as ‘*Zeeman*’ on account of his experience as a sailor, produced numerous images of ships on the water—from triple-masted cargo ships (*fluiten*) suitable for trade in the Baltic and ferries that offered intra-city fare, to the frigates and East Indiamen built for longer trajectories and more substantial cargoes

4 On the anthropology of naval architecture, see the chapter “Waterlines: Striated and Smooth Spaces as Techniques of Ship Design” in Siebert B., *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*, trans. G. Winthrop-Young (New York, NY: 2015) 147–163.



FIGURE 14.2 Hendrik Cornelisz. Vroom, *Return of the Second Voyage to the East Indies*, under the direction of Jacobus van Neck, the *Mauritius*, *Holland*, *Overijssel* en *Vrieslant* (1599). Oil on panel, 55.9 × 91.4 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. no. SK-A-2858).

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

[Fig. 14.5]. Amazing masses of ships crowd harbour views and vessels pepper the watery terrain of early modern maps. The 1599 painting by Hendrik Cornelisz. Vroom of *The Return of the Second Voyage to the East Indies* [Fig. 14.2] documents the reception given the fleet returning to Amsterdam: bumper to bumper boats and their passengers populate the harbour, heralding a new era—and the makings of a new state, the Dutch Republic, built on the riches derived from overseas trade. Wenceslaus Hollar's series of etchings *Navium Variarum Figurarum et Formarum* (1647) with its taxonomic depiction of twelve different views of vessels—including many tremendous East Indiamen, at various stages of construction and commission—offers a seventeenth-century update on the Huys-Bruegel series. The title page of Hollar's series [Fig. 14.6] shows what look to be a sailor and a merchant standing in awe before the title vignette of the series, disguised as the decorated hull (the '*spiegel*') of one of the warehouse-vehicle-fortresses that enabled the trade and defined the horizons of the time.

Long trips in unknown waters became a reality in late fifteenth-century Europe because of a new construction, the full-rigged ship, which 'incorporated the advantages of southern construction methods and the triangular



FIGURE 14.3 *Willem van de Velde, A Ship on the High Seas Caught by a Squall, Known as 'The Gust' (ca. 1680). Oil on canvas, 77 × 63.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. no. SK-A-1848).*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.



FIGURE 14.4 *Spice box with coat of arms of Prince Maurits (ca. 1600). Silver, 17.6 × 12.4 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. no. BK-NM-4313).*
IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

lateen sail with the hull form and the square rail of northern European types.⁵ The design of merchant ships known as ‘*naos*’ (Genoese) or ‘*naus*’ (Portuguese), large cargo vessels well suited to transporting cargo from Africa and India to Europe, was adapted by Flemish shipwrights and their Dutch counterparts over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Dutch *fluit*, a

5 Unger R.W., “Marine Paintings and the History of Shipbuilding”, in Freedberg D.A. – Vries J. de (eds.), *Art in History/History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture* (Santa Monica, CA: 1991) 75–93, 77. See also Haalmeijer H. – Vuik D., *Fluiten, katten en fregatten: De schepen van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, 1602–1798* (Bloemendaal: 2002); Daalder R. – Spits E. (eds.), *Schepen van de Gouden Eeuw* (Zutphen: 2005).



FIGURE 14.5 *Reinier Nooms, Four Dutch sailing ships, two of which are fluiten, inside a fence near the shore (1705). Etching, 19.1 × 29.7 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. RP-P-1887-A-11974).*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.



FIGURE 14.6 *Title page to Wenceslaus Hollar, Navium variae figurae (London, B. Cleynhens: 1647). Etching, 14.6 × 23.8 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. RP-P-OB-11.343).*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

long, slender vessel built for trade, carried grain and timber to the Netherlands from the Baltic; the so-called *Moedernegotie* conducted there served in turn to fund the voyages of the Dutch East and West India Companies alike.⁶ The seventeenth century saw the development of a multidecked, heavily rigged, three- or four-masted vessel: referred to by a variety of terms (*schip, jacht*), it came to be known for returning goods from the East Indies as a *retourschip* (lit. 'return ship'; East Indiaman).⁷ East Indiamen, the vessels that comprised the fleets sent by the VOC and the WIC, are famous for their trajectories and for their exploits, and feature prominently in travel accounts and other representations.

The ships depicted sailing through the Pillars of Hercules on the title page of Francis Bacon's 1620 *Instauratio Magna* is canonical within the iconography of the scientific revolution. As Juan Pimentel has demonstrated, this image, signifying the discovery of a new terrain of knowledge, resonates with the title page of an earlier, Spanish navigational manual (Andrés García de Céspedes, 1606) [Figs. 14.7, 14.8]. Referring to the relationship between these images as a 'splendid coincidence,' Pimentel specifies that 'the image [of the ship sailing between the pillars of Hercules] is used in the Anglo-Saxon tradition to represent increase of knowledge [...] while in the Iberian tradition it represents knowledge gained through discovery and conquest of the New World.'⁸ What actual ships enabled came to be emblemized in representations of ships: discovery, knowledge, power. As Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy have observed, with reference to these very title pages, 'Naval circulation led to a circulation of knowledge and in due time became an emblem of the rapid increase in scientific knowledge.'⁹ Recently, in a brilliant analysis of the rise of the marine seascape in the Netherlands, Bernhard Siegert has proposed a new conception of 'the relations among painting, piracy, techniques of navigation, and nation

6 The fundamental reference is Boxer C.R., *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600–1800* (London: 1965).

7 Parthesius R., *Ships in Tropical Waters: The Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia, 1595–1600* (Amsterdam: 2010) esp. chapter 5: "The Development of the VOC Fleet" 65–93.

8 Pimentel J., "The Iberian Vision: Science and Empire in the Framework of a Universal Monarchy, 1500–1800", *Osiris* 15 (2000) 17–30, at 24. Another instance of a title page featuring a ship is Huygen van Linschoten Jan, *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naar Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (Amsterdam, Cornelis Claesz: 1596), where a vessel sails into the foreground, and four vignettes surrounding the central image contain city profiles of Antwerp, Amsterdam, Enkhuizen, and Middelburg.

9 Dupré S. – Lüthy C., "Introduction: Silent Messengers. The World of Goods and the Circulation of Knowledge in the Early Modern Netherlands", in Dupré S. – Lüthy C. (eds.), *Silent Messengers: The Circulation of Material Objects of Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Berlin: 2011) 5.



FIGURE 14.7 Title page to Francis Bacon, *Instauratio Magna: Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia* (London, J. Billium: 1620). Engraving. Chicago, IL, Newberry Library (FB 49.059).

IMAGE © NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO, IL.



FIGURE 14.8 *Title page to Andrés García de Céspedes, Regimiento de navegación q[ue] mando hazer el Rei nuestro señor por orden de su Consejo Real de las Indias a Andres Garcia de Cespedes su cosmografo maior, siendo presidente en el dicho consejo el conde de Lemos (Madrid, Casa de Juan de la Cuesta: 1606). Bloomington, IN, Lilly Library.*

IMAGE © LILLY LIBRARY, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON, IN.

building'.¹⁰ According to Siegert, the emergent nation state is represented by the very ships—and images of ships—that secured the territory: 'this *chorein* [passage] of the Dutch inscribed itself in the form of the Dutch seascape of the late-sixteenth, early-seventeenth century'.¹¹ In other words, in the early modern era and especially around the turn of the seventeenth century, ships and representations of them went hand in hand with the development of new forms of commerce, interaction, and nationhood.

Is it far-fetched to consider the early modern ship a site of mediation? At its broadest, the noun 'mediation' denotes practices intended to reconcile opposites or to intercede between parties or concerns. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'mediation' in the first instance as 'agency or action as a mediator; the action of mediating between parties in dispute; intercession on behalf of another'.¹² Certainly ships were sent in the spirit of conflict resolution: Diplomatic envoys, for example, set out with the specific intent of resolution by mediation. Many early modern ships traversed space and time (water being their medium, we might say) in order to negotiate, where the peaceful resolution of dispute was not a primary aim, but trade or warfare were. The *OED* lists as a second definition of 'mediation', 'Agency or action as an intermediary; the state or fact of serving as an intermediate agent, a means of action, or a medium of transmission; instrumentality'. This definition would apply to early modern ships that mediated or enabled mediation between agents of political and mercantile interests, for example. Instrumentality and transmission are key here, qualifying the relationship between agents or objects and concepts as a process that is *not* immediate, and is potentially fraught, fractured, diffuse. Raymond Williams reminds us in his examination of keywords for cultural analysis that, in a Marxist context, mediation tends to presuppose irreconcilable differences.¹³ Media studies, as practiced by Friedrich Kittler, for example, analyse mechanisms of transmission and the various processes of mediation they entail or inform—modulation, transformation, synchronization, delay, storage, transposition, scrambling, scanning, mapping, for example.¹⁴

10 Siegert B., "The *Chorein* of the Pirate: On the Origins of the Dutch Seascape", *Grey Room* 57 (2014) 6–23.

11 Siegert, "The *Chorein* of the Pirate" 8.

12 "Mediation, n.", *OED Online*, March 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115665?redirectedFrom=Mediation> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

13 Williams R., *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, NY: 1976) 204–207.

14 Kittler F.A., *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. and introduction G. Winthrop-Young – M. Wutz (Stanford: 1999) 2.

Let us think, then, of early modern ships as vehicles of mediation—vessels that reconciled geographical differences and vessels that generated processes and relations we can comprehend under the rubric of mediation.¹⁵ The commerce transacted in the East Indies by Europeans, for example, depended on ships to reach, secure, and deploy such sites of mediation as Goa or Bantam—key trading posts in the early modern era. In the formative years of the global Baroque, the constellations traced across the waters by European ships were the product and the source alike of a variety of sorts of mediation, interaction, and entanglement. The remainder of this essay presents a series of mediations undertaken in the name of trade around the turn of the seventeenth century. These mediations—negotiations, miscommunications, disputes—occurred in the context of Dutch trade overseas; they are mediated here by an account written in Florence in 1605.

In the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Dutch secured a foothold in intra-Asian network trade—trade the VOC sought out and administered, on behalf of the state in formation, the emergent Dutch Republic. This is heralded in Vroom's depiction of the return of the fleet [Fig. 14.2]; commemorated in a ship-shaped silver spice cellar produced ca. 1600 [Fig. 14.4]; and celebrated in such images as the panoramic 1611 city view of Amsterdam [Fig. 14.9], in which a veritable forest of masts darkens the edges of the built city, and an array of imposing vessels populate the harbour. This paean to a city still in formation presents Amsterdam as a global trade hub, calling it 'de wijtvermaerde Hooft-Coop-stadt des gantschen Weerelts Amsterdam' ('the widely renowned capital of trade of the entire world, Amsterdam').¹⁶ The text accompanying a slightly earlier print describes the city of Bantam in terms very close to those in which Amsterdam would be described [Fig. 14.10]. Bantam, too, is referred to as a 'vermaerde Coopstadt' or 'renowned emporium,' and the source of

spices such as pepper, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, mace, ginger, and so on as well as medicinal drugs, precious stones, such as diamonds, rubies,

15 The history of the slave trade and the technicalities of transport by ship exceed the scope of this paper, but might also be considered a form of mediation, albeit a grisly one. See, *inter alia*, Postma J., *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815* (Cambridge: 1990).

16 Letterpress text belonging to Claes Jansz. Visscher and Pieter Bast, *Profile View of Amsterdam, seen from the IJ* (1611). Cf. Fig. 9. See Bakker B. – Schmitz E. (eds.), *Het aanzien van Amsterdam: Panoramas, plattegronden en profielen uit de Gouden Eeuw* (Bussum: 2007) plate 1, cat. no. 60; Chong A., "Contained Under the Name of Still Life: The Associations of Still Life Painting", in Chong A. – Kloek W. (eds.), *Still Life Paintings from the Netherlands 1550–1720*, exh. cat., Cleveland Museum of Art and Rijksmuseum (Zwolle: 1999) 11–38, at 19.



FIGURE 14.9 *Claes Jansz. Visscher and Pieter Bast, Profile View of Amsterdam, seen from the IJ (1611). Etching and engraving with letterpress text on 16 sheets, 25.6 × 115.4 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. RP-P-AO-20–22). Detail of the two center sheets.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

turquoises, emeralds, sapphires, and others, and also pearls and many other countless strange curiosities, that are found only in the East Indies.¹⁷

Here too, in this image, ships figure prominently—indeed, this is not technically a city view, though the text does describe the city of Bantam and its value to the Dutch: This is a depiction of a naval battle between the Dutch and the Portuguese for control of the port that took place around Christmas time 1601. Technically, Dutch merchants and, as of 1602, the VOC, waged trade, not war. All too often, the line between the two was a very fine one. The naval battle described in print and text follows on and epitomizes earlier skirmishes between the Dutch and the Portuguese, going back to 1599. Indeed, the establishment of the Netherlands as a global economy and the European entrepôt

17 *Claes Jansz. Visscher, View of Siege of Dutch Ships at Bantam, 1603 or 1608, engraving and etching, 36.5 cm x 50 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. RP-P-OB-80.599). The full title opens: 'Uvarachtighe Afbeeldinghe vanden wonderbaren ende ghedenckwaerdighen Scheeps strijdt ende slaghe / welcke in Oost-Indien / int gesichte van de vermaerde Coopstadt Bantam gheschiedt is [...].'*



for trade from the East and West Indies depended equally on the mechanisms of war and piracy and on the entanglements of trade. The remainder of this essay offers a case study, the story of one merchant's travels and travails that exemplify the extent to which mediation governed the seas in the early modern era.

The first private voyager to circumnavigate the globe was the Florentine merchant Francesco Carletti (1573–1636). His exploits and encounters are preserved in the form of an account he wrote on his return to Europe after nearly twenty years, his *Ragionamenti* or *Chronicles*.¹⁸ In 1591, at the age of eighteen, Carletti travelled to Seville under the apprenticeship of a Florentine merchant, Nicolo Parenti; and in 1594 Carletti and his father, who had joined him in Spain, set sail for South America, nominally under the protection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinando I de' Medici (1549–1609). Insofar as the young Florentine aspired to furnish the Grand Duke with curiosities from the east, he ventured abroad on the model of Francesco Sassetti, who supplied Ferdinando and his brother Francesco with medicinal goods and '*galanterie*' from India, where Sassetti lived between 1584 and his death there in 1588.¹⁹ In 1598 Carletti and his father reached Macao, where his father died; Carletti subsequently began to make his way home. When he returned to Europe in 1602, he did so in a manner entirely contrary to his aims and ambitions and within tenuous reach of the extensive lavish goods he had procured along the way. He returned on a ship outfitted by Dutch merchants, which had captured the Portuguese vessel on which Carletti departed from Goa in December 1601; and after landing in Middelburg, in Zeeland, whence the Dutch ships had sailed east, Carletti spent more than two years fighting an extensive legal battle to regain his goods. He was unsuccessful. On his return to Florence late in 1605, Carletti composed an account of his travels in an effort to preserve

18 The *Ragionamenti* were written for the Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici. The original text is Codice 1331 T.3.22, Biblioteca Angelica, Rome. I have consulted the Italian transcription: Carletti Francesco, *Ragionamenti del mio viaggio intorno al mondo*, ed. A. Dei (Milan: 1987); and the English edition: Carletti Francesco, *My Voyage Around the World*, trans. H. Weinstock (New York, NY: 1964). See also Sgrilli G., *Francesco Carletti: Mercante e viaggiatore fiorentino, 1573–1636* (Rocca San Casciano: 1905); Roelofson C.G., "Het trieste slot van een reis om de wereld in het begin van de zeventiende eeuw: De affaire Carletti", *Mededelingen van de Nederlandse Vereniging voor Zeegeschiedenis* 20 (1970) 13–30; Russo R., *Con Carletti intorno al mondo* (Bari: 2008).

19 Karl B., "Galanterie di cose rare . . . ' Filippo Sassetti's Indian Shopping List for the Medici Grand Duke Francesco and His Brother Cardinal Ferdinando", *Itinerario: International Journal on the History of European Expansion and Global Interaction* 32 (2008) 23–41. I am very grateful to Katie Heyning of Middelburg for sharing her notes on Carletti.

his honour. Addressed and dedicated to Ferdinando I, Carletti's account—the *Ragionamenti* or *Chronicles*—tells of his life abroad, his decision to quit the slave trade that served as the initial impetus for his wide travels, and his fateful encounters with the Dutch on his return to Europe from Goa. It would not be an exaggeration to refer to Carletti's *Ragionamenti* as chronicles of a series of mediations; ironically, his failure to mediate his fortune successfully may have given rise to this extraordinary text.

In the 'Fourth Chronicle of the East Indies,' one of the final chapters of his *Ragionamenti* or *Chronicles*, Carletti describes life in Goa, Portuguese trade in the East Indies, and the politics of Asian trade with specific reference to recent changes in the balance of power.²⁰ Goa had served as the capital of the Portuguese viceroyalty since 1510, and had become the preeminent mercantile hub for Europeans trading in the East Indies by the time Carletti arrived there in March 1599. Carletti remained in Goa longer than he had planned, awaiting a shipment of merchandise he had purchased in Macao that was delayed by weather.²¹ The goods he had bought in Macao, after his father died and he resolved to return to Florence, included raw silk, silk thread, and silk for needlework; 'a great quantity of musk'; gold, which he specifies is 'a sort of merchandise and is used more for gilding one or another kind of furniture and other objects than as money'; silk accoutrements; porcelain, including jars filled with preserved ginger; china root; a Chinese geographical atlas (preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence); and 'various other curious things' intended for the Grand Duke—more on these goods shortly.²² Of the Indies and of the city Carletti writes,

there is no other region in the world in which it is possible to live better and more lavishly, and particularly in the city of Goa, in which there are many businesses that, without any loss on exchange in going and returning, earn from twenty-five to thirty percent at the beginning of each year

20 See Carletti, *My Voyage* 201–226; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 172–189.

21 Carletti, *My Voyage* 202; for his description of Macao and his purchases, see 144–150. See also Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 131–136, 173.

22 Carletti, *My Voyage* 148–149 for a description of the bedroom silks; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 135 ('And of the abovementioned silk—that is, of those twists, good for sewing and in all the colors that can be imagined, light as well as dark—I had them make a bed—the curtains, that is, with also all the accessories and furnishing for a room [...]. And that design was of various fantastic animals, birds, and flowers.'). See Karl B., "Marvellous Things are Made with Needles": Bengal *colchas* in European Inventories, c. 1580–1630, *Journal of the History of Collections* 23 (2010) 301–313, on Carletti see esp. 306.

or, to say it better, at the end of the voyages [...] to Zoffala, Mozambique, Ormuz, China, and the Moluccas, and also to Bengal.²³

While waiting for his goods from Macao, Carletti resolved to sell the silk he had in hand. He did not sell directly, but sent the silk to the Indian city of Cambay, 'where it was sold and earned me seventy per cent and more of what it had cost me in China'.²⁴ From Cambay, 'by way of a merchant of the Gujarati nation with whom I had correspondence,' he received linens he intended to sell in Europe, along with

bedcovers embroidered with curious, very beautiful designs in workmanship of a fineness rarely seen, which they also work on silk fabric. And I also had them send me a goodly quantity of things made of mountain crystal and other varieties of stones, such as blood agate, milk agate, and the like.²⁵

Indeed, intra-Asian trade depended on a series of cautiously negotiated mediations.

In Goa, Carletti was ideally positioned to make the most of the information and trade networks spun throughout the East Indies by the Portuguese over the course of the preceding century. He describes the splendours of Moghul Emperor Jahangir, for example, on the basis of 'a letter sent by a Jesuit' who travelled from Lahore to Agra with the imperial procession.²⁶ In addition to lavish lists of the goods that were brought to Goa, Carletti's *Chronicles* offer a vivid, racy even, description of the life of a merchant 'at ease in the city'. Merchants were 'always engaged in festivities, songs, music, games, and balls,' while their commands for wares were filled throughout the intra-Asian trade network by captains they engaged.²⁷ The Portuguese 'live very lavishly and comfortably in Goa,' Carletti writes, 'going about constantly on horseback (the horses being brought from Persia with the ships from Ormuz, and from Arabia)' and are always accompanied by 'goodly troupes of slaves'.²⁸ Of the array of exquisite goods that arrived at Goa, many were installed as decoration for the houses of the Portuguese residents there.

23 Carletti, *My Voyage* 222; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 186–187.

24 Carletti, *My Voyage* 202; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 173.

25 Carletti, *My Voyage* 202–203; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 173.

26 Carletti, *My Voyage* 203; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 173.

27 Carletti, *My Voyage* 223; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 187.

28 Carletti, *My Voyage* 206–207; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 176.

From China comes everything good and beautiful which could be desired in the way of very rich adornments of gold and silk, beds, chests, tables, cabinets, and chairs, all gilded and with a black varnish that is made from a substance taken from the bark of a tree that grows in China and which at first flows like pitch, but then becomes so hard that it repels water and so shiny that one can use it as a mirror. And all this is very beautifully decorated.²⁹

In addition to lacquer ware, whose manufacture Carletti attempts to capture while praising its products, the Portuguese homes were also outfitted with porcelain, he writes: 'They eat everything from Chinese porcelain and, what is better, their foods are entirely made of exquisitely flavoured birds.'³⁰ Carletti's sumptuous description of local culture and cuisine, of slaves and loves, of porcelain and poison, and of beautiful mestizo children of Portuguese fathers and Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Moluccan, and Bengali mothers is redolent of the entangled, cosmopolitan, highly mediated culture and society Asian markets engendered.³¹

Although Goa produced no indigenous wares other than coconuts, Carletti writes, 'nonetheless it overflows with every delight and every kind of goods, which are brought there from all sections of those Indies and Oriental regions of which (that is, of whose harbours and traffic) the Portuguese are in control.'³² While describing Goa as a global hub, Carletti also points to a crucial shift: Whereas, he wrote, the Portuguese had long dominated the trade in goods trafficked from the east to Europe via Goa, other European nations were gaining a stronghold. With regard to the trade dynamics Carletti describes and the relative loss of their foothold by the Portuguese, he mentions no nation more frequently than the Dutch. (He had, as we shall see, every reason to judge the Dutch most merciless in the pursuit of profit and exotic goods.) Goa continued to thrive at the time he described it, but East Indian trade was no longer solely in Portuguese control: 'many years ago the Dutch and the English and the French took away from them, one could say, the traffic of the Moluccas,

29 Carletti, *My Voyage* 207; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 176.

30 Carletti, *My Voyage* 207; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 176–177.

31 See Maillard N., *Voyages en abyme: Lecture ethnologique des Ragionamenti del mio viaggio intorno al mondo de Francesco Carletti, marchand florentin (1573?–1636)*, Recherches et travaux de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des Lettres 5 (Neuchâtel: 1985) <http://doc.rero.ch/record/232913/files/MaillardN1985RT5.pdf> (accessed: 02.08.2016).

32 Carletti, *My Voyage* 219–220; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 185.

whence come cloves, nutmeg, mace, pepper, and other sorts of merchandise of those regions'.³³ Carletti specifies myriad ways in which European competitors, prime among them the Dutch, diminished Portuguese trade. 'Also ruined is the traffic with China,' on account of prices being higher,

because of the abovementioned Hollanders and others [who], having gone there with their multitudes of ships, have reduced everything to lower prices, buying with money of account those things which the Portuguese bought at a profit in exchange for cotton cloths from Negopatan [Negapatam], Manipore, and Coromandel.³⁴

Indeed, according to Carletti, by 1605 the Dutch had infested the whole of the elaborate Asian network trade—by entering with cash rather than gradually; by way of bypassing the longstanding intra-Asian network trade of goods; and by 'preying upon the carracks that ply to and from Lisbon'.³⁵ Carletti describes Portuguese trade in the Indies as intrinsically profitable; the value of the coins, the *reales*, he remarks, was fifty percent higher in India than in Lisbon. Notably, he also characterizes the trade in Asian exotica as the signal accomplishment of the Portuguese:

[it] is the splendour of all that Orient and [it] caused and still causes the whole world to marvel and is the greatest thing of usefulness accomplished by the Portuguese [...]. On those items incredible profits were and still are made by means of the merchandise that they send from Goa to Portugal on the aforementioned carracks, which ordinarily leave in the month of December, as also in that of January.³⁶

The Dutch 'infest those seas and keep them in continuous fear'.³⁷ To make matters worse, Carletti reports, they were also shifting the balance of trade values in the Levant: 'Similarly, they have frightened those who trade through Ormuz, an island at the entrance of the Persian Gulf.'³⁸ According to Carletti Dutch interference in trade in the East Indies and beyond threatened Portugal's national renown, as well as its investment and profit.

33 Carletti, *My Voyage* 219–220; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 185.

34 Carletti, *My Voyage* 220; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 185.

35 Carletti, *My Voyage* 220; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 185.

36 Carletti, *My Voyage* 220–221; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 185.

37 Carletti, *My Voyage* 221; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 185.

38 Carletti, *My Voyage* 221; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 186.

Carletti's *Ragionamenti* or *Chronicles* were written in an attempt to secure his honour, and record the fate of his worldly goods—which he lost doubly: first, in spring 1602, when the Portuguese carrack the *San Iago* on which he secured passage back to Europe from Goa was captured by Dutch ships outfitted by the *Verenigde Zeeuwse Compagnie* (United Zeeland Company, one of the forerunners of the VOC); and second, when the Admiralty Court of Middelburg determined in August 1602 that the entire cargo of the *San Iago* was 'good prize' and property of its claimants, the United Zeeland Company.³⁹ Following the arrival of his goods from Macao, Carletti secured passage to Lisbon on the outgoing vessel the *San Iago*, which departed Christmas morning 1601. Carletti arranged with the captain of that ship a space aboard where he 'could set up a bedroom or living quarter, in which a bed was to be placed for sleeping indoors' as well as 'a space for stowing my merchandise, which I had mostly in large cases'. Carletti took along with him three servants—'one of the Japanese nation, a Korean, and the other a Mozambique Negro'—and 100 chickens, 'which were excellent in every way', for consumption when meat was served. He paid for these spaces, in amounts he recounts in detail, also explaining how such space, 'conceded by the King, once his pepper has been loaded, to each officer and sailor,' was allocated and leased. Many such spaces, he writes, 'are available, and on everything that can be accommodated in them no customs are paid either in India or in Lisbon'.⁴⁰ The *San Iago* sailed past Madagascar and around the Cape of Good Hope, on to St. Helena. Although no provisions were needed, the captain was under royal orders to meet other ships in the fleet arriving from Cochin. The *San Iago* reached St. Helena on Friday, 14 March and anchored as instructed in what was deemed a safe position. Immediately, however, and in fulfilment of various portents Carletti names in his telling, two ships approached—the *Zeelandia* and *Langebercke*, from Zeeland, captained by Cornelis Bastiaensz and Nicolaes Anthonisz, respectively, and under the general command of Laurens Bicker.⁴¹ These East Indiamen, outfitted by the United Zeeland Company, had sailed east from Middelburg prior to the founding of the VOC in Amsterdam in 1602, and were returning to Zeeland laden

39 For the most comprehensive account of the legal affair, see Ittersum M. van, *Profit and Principle: Hugo Grotius, Natural Rights Theories and the Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies, 1595–1615* (Leiden: 2006) esp. chapter 3: "Why was *De Jure Praedae* Written" 123–151.

40 Carletti, *My Voyage* 228; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 190. On the slaves, see Schrader S., "The Many Identities of Rubens's *Man in Korean Costume*: New Perspectives on Old Interpretations", in Schrader S. (ed.), *Looking East: Rubens's Encounter with Asia*, exh. cat., The J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, CA: 2013) 1–23.

41 Unger W.S., *De Oudste Reizen van de Zeeuwen* (The Hague: 1948) 46.

with pepper. They also carried members of the court of the Sultan of Atjeh on what has been described as ‘the first diplomatic mission of a southeast Asian polity to Europe’.⁴²

Though it is unclear who instigated the conflict between the Portuguese and the Dutch vessels at St. Helena, it is certain that, once engaged, the Zeelanders did not let up in their effort to capture the *San Iago*. According to Carletti’s report, panic broke out on board when the Zeelanders approached and, ‘with no direction or sense of what with some reasonableness could be done (notwithstanding the fact that the ships came more in a display of war than one of peace)’ the captain fired at the Dutch ships.⁴³ The Dutch ‘decided to wait no longer, for it seemed to them only too certainly an invitation in response to the desire that they had, which was to fight’, he writes. It was ‘beyond doubt they had set about stirring things up that way so as to have an occasion to seize upon.’⁴⁴ Although he claims that it would take an author with the playwright Andrea Salvadori’s abilities to describe the battle that followed, Carletti offers a robust description of nearly three days of fighting, at the conclusion of which the *San Iago* was on the brink of sinking—and the Portuguese surrendered to the Zeelanders.

From St. Helena, Carletti secured passage to Zeeland, where his confidence that his goods would be restored to him on arrival was sorely broken, and he returned empty-handed to Florence three years later. The story is a dramatic one, and bears on the development of early modern global trade. It is directly relevant to the matter of how the Dutch acquired the status of merchants of the exotic in the early years of the seventeenth century, and of how property came to be defined by the Dutch in the context of expanding trade. The capture of the Portuguese trade vessel by the United Zeeland Company ships ‘stirred up a hornet’s nest of political and legal issues’.⁴⁵ Among other things, it inspired the design and production of a commemorative medal; it gave rise to a lawsuit that dragged on for three years and involved local and international powers; and it influenced the legal scholar Hugo Grotius, whose treatise on trade and war

42 Mitrasing I.S., *The Age of Aceh and the Evolution of Kingship 1599–1641*, Ph.D. dissertation (Leiden University: 2011) 87.

43 Carletti, *My Voyage* 231; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 193.

44 Carletti, *My Voyage* 231–232; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 193: ‘Sentito le nave questo saluto, non la volsero più cotta, e le parve loro un invite pur troppo a preposito al desiderio che avevano di combattere, et che forse senza dubbio andavano in quell modo attizzando per aver occasione di pigliarci.’

45 Ittersum, *Profit and Principle* 123.

in the East Indies, *De Jure Praedae*, he composed after a subsequent significant capture by Dutch East Indiamen of a Portuguese ship.⁴⁶

While space does not permit an examination of the act of state-sponsored piracy that gave rise to Grotius's treatise *De Jure Praedae*, it is worthwhile examining the capture of the goods aboard the *San Iago* and their fate in some further detail. After the Portuguese surrendered, the Zeelanders made their way on board and, according to Carletti, offered a conflicted apology: 'they made a ceremony of consoling us for what had happened, saying that they were sorry about it and putting the blame for it upon us, who had been the first to provoke it by the artillery shot set off by the captain of our ship.'⁴⁷ The Zeelanders stated openly that they had no letters of marque, or permission from their admiral Prince Maurits or the States General, to capture other nations' vessels, and that they had only fought because they were attacked first. They agreed to spare the lives of the passengers on the *San Iago* in exchange for the goods aboard the ship, if the ship survived the night. The ship was in a terrible state and taking water: Its principal cargo, pepper, was strewn about during the fighting and 'the pumps or bilge-removers could no longer be used, having become clogged by the pepper floating on the water and entering into them.'⁴⁸ The Portuguese promised to deliver all jewels on board to their captors; and the Zeelanders in turn promised to repair the ship in order to enable the Portuguese to make good on their agreement to render the goods to them. As evening fell, Carletti convinced an Italian-speaking scribe to take him to the Dutch ships straight away; this bargain was possible, Carletti notes, because of the precious goods he had with him:

I told him that I had many jewels and much other stuff ready to hand which we could carry with us, thus removing it from that danger—and, in particular, more than 2,000 ounces of musk (of which 1,600 were mine) and the little structure in which the bed was, with other curious things

46 A medal that commemorates the capture of the Portuguese vessel by the Zeeland ships survives, and was recently recorded as being in the collection of the Koninklijk Penningkabinet, Leiden. See Liedtke W., *Dutch Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: 2007) vol. 1, 218, fig. 57. The Koninklijk Penningkabinet is, however, defunct and the present whereabouts of its holdings unclear. On *De Jure Praedae*, see also (in addition to Ittersum, *Profit and Principle*), Fruin R.J., *An Unpublished Work of Hugo Grotius's* (Leiden: 1925) and Borschberg P., *Hugo Grotius, the Portuguese, and Free Trade in the East Indies* (Singapore: 2011).

47 Carletti, *My Voyage* 236; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 196.

48 Carletti, *My Voyage* 237; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 197.

that I was bringing to Your Serene Highness [Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici].⁴⁹

The following day the *San Iago* was miraculously, according to those still on board, afloat: indeed, 'the carrack was shipping less water than earlier because the pepper was interfering with the force of water entering through the holes'.⁵⁰ Pepper was the King's cargo and the primary motivation for the spice trade conducted by the Portuguese and, in turn, the Dutch and others. In this remarkable story, it plays numerous roles in addition to instigating the voyages and itineraries of such carracks as the *San Iago*: When the ship took water it clogged the pumps but, in time, it clogged the holes through which the water entered the vessel as well. Carletti does not make much of the ironies here, but the fate of goods more generally is as central and as inconsistent as the peppercorns. Later, in passing, Carletti describes the waters in which the two Zeeland East Indiamen the *Langebercke* and the *Zeelandia*, the Portuguese *San Iago*, and a third Dutch ship, the *Witte Arend*, from Amsterdam found themselves after the battle and the surrender as a floating bazaar. His spectacular description is worth citing and explaining. The *Witte Arend* did not enter the battle between the Zeelanders and the Portuguese, in adherence with the instructions under which it sailed, and the prohibition against the use of force except in the case of self-defense.⁵¹

Though it had not fought because it could not, [it] nonetheless collected a goodly booty of merchandise [*un buon bottino di mercantie*] and various things that had been thrown into the sea in order to lighten the carrack [...] the sea having been all covered with silk in skeins and in cloths, with carpetings and infinite other goods, of which that ship, with little trouble, was able to re-collect as much as it wanted [...].⁵²

Imagine: The sea itself delivered the goods, merchandise described as loot, to neutral bystanders. A sodden site of mediation, indeed!

49 Carletti, *My Voyage* 237–238; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 197 ('Lo scrivano della nave capitana' is translated in the English edition as 'the mate of their flagship'. He is first mentioned in Carletti, *My Voyage* 236); Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 196–197: '[...] e la casetta dove era il letto, con altre cose curiose che portavo a V.A.S'

50 Carletti, *My Voyage* 238; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 197.

51 Ittersum, *Profit and Principle* 125.

52 Carletti, *My Voyage* 243; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 201.

After repairs had been made to the *San Iago*, the Zeelanders encouraged the Portuguese to leave the ship—but did not provide sloops on which they could make passage to the shore or to the Zeelanders' ships. A number jumped overboard but could not swim; those who made it to the Zeelanders' sloops had to pass their unsheathed swords. Carletti describes another means to obtain passage, concocted by his Korean servant on the spot. For all manner of reasons, not least because of the role that images play in the salvation of this servant, but principally because of the dynamics of mediation at play, the passage merits citation at length.

Whoever was clever, whoever was able, in the midst of those dangers, to place a chain of gold or pearls around his neck or carry in his hands some cluster of diamonds, was received graciously by them [the Zeelanders], so that they could take all the things that he was carrying. And many saved themselves who would not otherwise have been saved.⁵³

In other words, market goods could mediate personal salvation. 'But,' continues Carletti,

one of my servants, of the Korean nation, played a trick on them despite the fact that he did not know how to swim and was aware that they were not accepting servants or slaves like himself. Around his neck he hung two of my little pictures, one on which was depicted a crucified Christ, whereas the other was an *Ecce homo*, and both of them on copper. I still have them and value them highly because they were made by good artists in Japan, as well as because of the trick carried out by that servant of mine. Wearing them, he plunged into the sea and was quickly picked up by those sailors, who thought that he had something of great value to them. And when they saw what the things were, they gave them back to him, and as he was already in their boat, let him remain there, and thus took him to their ship, where he saved those pictures for me with very little difficulty because they, being mostly heretical Calvinists, did not wish to see pictures either of the saints or even of God Himself crucified.⁵⁴

53 Carletti, *My Voyage* 239; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 198.

54 Carletti, *My Voyage* 239; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 198. These 'little pictures' ('quadretti, uno dove era dipinto un Cristo crocifisso e nell'altro un Ecce Huomo, ambi sopra rame') may have been Japanese copper images, related to those employed in *e-funi* practices as

Like so much of Carletti's *Chronicles*, this passage illuminates the value of goods and lives in the context of East Indian trade—and it involves a sly joke. Moreover, it demonstrates the uses of Christian images made in Japan—three sorts of uses: by Carletti as private devotional images; by his Korean servant as a means for salvation by the greedy Zeelanders; and by Carletti as a sort of *ex voto* to commemorate the event he describes here.

In addition to these pictures, Carletti also managed to take porcelain with him aboard the Zeeland flagship, where he and fifty other men were housed in the hutch under strict watch en route from St. Helena. Having repaired the *San Iago* to the point that it could sail again, the Zeelanders sailed west, arriving twenty-three days later at the island of Fernando de Noronha off the coast of Brazil. Carletti describes surviving this passage and the horrendous food he and his fellow passengers were fed as a spell of good fortune.

I would have been in a bad way if good luck (*fortuna*) had not helped me by making me have with me one of those porcelain vases full of pears preserved in China, it having been among the many vases containing conserves which I had turned over to the Zeeland captain.⁵⁵

Those in the hutch, he writes, were treated 'without any pity from those good persons who were happily enjoying the many gifts they had found on the carrack' (*Tanti regali che avevano trovato nella caracca*).⁵⁶ The dispossessed goods were translated into gifts, which the Zeelanders 'found'—much as the *Witte Arend* had collected 'a goodly booty of merchandise'.

The status of prized goods was as fluid as the waters in which they changed hands. Carletti bargained and persuaded his way back to Zeeland from the coast of Brazil by cooking some sort of seafoal in a manner that made it not only palatable but delectable even, and by reminding his captors of the Grand Duke of Tuscany's control over the port of Leghorn (Livorno). When the ships sailed from Fernando de Noronha some of the Portuguese who stayed (in Brazil) warned Carletti that he would not be safe. His response? 'Where my goods go, I want to go with my body, come what may.'⁵⁷ Carletti arrived in Middelburg on 7 July 1602. His body and his goods were indeed in one and the same place, but

described, for example, by DaCosta Kaufmann T., *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago, IL: 2004) esp. chapter 10, "Designed for Desecration: *Fumi-e* and European Art" 303–340.

55 A confusing reference: Laurens Bicker was from Amsterdam. Carletti, *My Voyage* 240–241; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 199.

56 Carletti, *My Voyage* 240; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 199.

57 Carletti, *My Voyage* 240; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 199.

divided by the events of the preceding months and the claims laid to them by the Zeelanders. He was not the only one whose fate changed dramatically: He recalls in his *Chronicles* that when the *San Iago* made land, twenty days after the East Indiamen arrived, and was unloaded, it contained

much more wealth than they [the Middelburgers] had thought or could think, even though more than one fourth of it had been lost, for sure, and especially of the jewels, two-thirds of which had been stolen by whoever wanted them and by the very captains and other officers of the ships that had captured it.⁵⁸

‘Those jewels’, he continues,

were changing hands during those days, a good part of them going to those who had lost nothing and had had no part in that misfortune. And many who had been poor became rich, whereas the rich became beggars.⁵⁹

Carletti repeatedly emphasizes the fluidity with which goods changed hands; with which, for example, merchandise became gifts; and with which owners were dispossessed and new owners made by taking those lost goods. He refers at one point to his efforts to conceive

a way of recovering the things that I had aboard the carrack that was taken as a prize by the two ships of the Zeeland merchants, who had been sent to India to trade for spices in the Molucca Islands, and not to act as corsairs.⁶⁰

Things were exchanged by processes of capture (prize) and exchange (trade), and Carletti was left empty-handed. Once the returning fleet made land, the transfer of goods became a legal affair. Carletti recounts that he attempted first by friendly means to ‘recover [his] possessions’ but that he was encouraged to pursue legal means (‘the route of justice’) to defend his merchandise, which the Zeelanders ‘pretended to have acquired legally in the capture’.⁶¹ The subject of the subsequent and last chapter, ‘The Sixth and Final Chronicle of

58 Carletti, *My Voyage* 244; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 202.

59 Carletti, *My Voyage* 244–245; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 202.

60 Carletti, *My Voyage* 246; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 202.

61 Carletti, *My Voyage* 245; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 202.

the East Indies' of the *Ragionamenti* is the lawsuit that ensued. Armed with letters he procured via an intermediary from the Grand Duke, Carletti set out from Middelburg in September 1602 and presented the letters directly to the Stadtholder Prince Maurits, who was at the time engaged in Grave, in Gelderland, which he freed from Spanish control that year. Maurits assured Carletti that he would support his cause, but also stated, 'he could do very little because this was a concern of the merchants, over whom he exercised no command'.⁶² In addition to the support of the Grand Duke, whose neutrality and control of Leghorn (Livorno) were frequently cited to emphasize the importance of keeping him in good favour, Carletti also solicited the aid of the French ambassador to the States General Paul Choart de Buzanval, who was already making gestures on behalf of Carletti in August in The Hague.⁶³ (Henri IV, King of France, was married to Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici's niece Maria de' Medici.)

Carletti's claims gave rise to a complex, international affair that stirred political and mercantile interests and passions alike. International affiliations proved insufficient, however, to counter the claims and the power within the United Provinces of the United Zeeland Company and the Admiralty of Middelburg. As Martine van Ittersum has explained, regarding the complexity of the situation and the difficulty Carletti faced, 'the province of Zeeland was, quite literally, on the frontline of the war with Philip III of Spain and Portugal and economically quite dependent on the Indies trade'.⁶⁴ The merchants of the United Zeeland Company were now operating as VOC merchants, as the companies had merged in March 1602. Having secured the *San Iago* and its contents, the Zeeland merchants to whom Carletti appealed amicably were resolved not to settle the matter out of court, and 'went all about the city saying that' the matter had to go to court because 'if they restored [his] things to [him] they would have to restore their things to all the others who, also being neutrals, had had interest in that carrack'.⁶⁵ The ensuing months brought intense diplomatic and legal parrying, on the part of all parties involved.⁶⁶

62 Carletti, *My Voyage* 247; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 203.

63 See Rijperman H.H.P. (ed.), *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal van 1576 tot 1603*, vol. 12 ('s-Gravenhage: 1950) 89–90, no. 90 (2 September 1602).

64 Ittersum, *Profit and Principle* 139. See chapter 3, especially section 3.5, "Challenging the Verdict of the Middelburg Admiralty Court: Francisco Carletti" 139–150.

65 Carletti, *My Voyage* 250; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 205. Cited by Ittersum, *Profit and Principle* 140.

66 The resolutions of the Middelburg Chamber of the VOC regarding the return of the fleet and ensuing legal matters are published in Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 156–203 (chapter 4,

Inventories of the goods aboard the Zeeland vessels were drawn up, and a price for the pepper was set. The goods belonging to the Atjeh mission (cloves, indigo, and pepper) were accounted for, and a funeral for the emissary who died in Middelburg was arranged.⁶⁷ On 23 November the Middelburg Admiralty officially permitted the sale of goods, 'initially all of the damaged goods, and then porcelain, blankets, textiles, pavilions, bed coverings, wall hangings, and woven cloths'. The sale of the porcelain was to take place in the warehouse where it was kept, in packets of twenty small dishes and ten little bowls at a time; and the prices of ebony, raw silk, musk, cloves, mace, and cinnamon were likewise set. Over the course of the subsequent days and weeks the remaining goods were sold—among them, wet pepper, raw linen, cinnamon, saltpetre, camphor, galbanum, spikenard, cardamom. In January, all of the gold and silver aboard the *San Iago* was melted down and sold.⁶⁸

Although a provision was made by the Admiralty on 25 November that the sale of Carletti's goods would cease until further decree, it is not clear what measures were taken to protect his goods, in the general rush to allocate the wares—wares that are referred to in several records of the Zeeland College of the Admiralty Board and the Zeeland Chamber of the VOC as 'booty'.⁶⁹ That the carrack and its contents—the 'booty' prized by the Zeeland merchants from their Portuguese enemies—were for sale was advertised across the land, by way of printed notices.⁷⁰ Moreover, particularly precious items were offered to various statesmen as gifts. In early October items were set aside 'to be presented', including spices, textiles, porcelain, bezoar stones, and musk. Prince Maurits received a 'golden throne with its accoutrements, a pavilion, a peacock

"De Reis voor de Verenigde Zeeuwse Compagnie, 1601–1603": C. "Gegevens betreffende de Afwikkeling van de Reis").

67 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 184–185.

68 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 195.

69 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 174. See Ittersum, *Profit and Principle* 141. The word *buyt* or *beuyt* appears numerous times in the 1602/1603 documents transcribed by Unger. See, for example, Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 193, 199.

70 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 191: 'Bommenee gecommiteerd om de biletten te doen drucken tot vercoopen van de caracque, ende dat op Woensdage den 13 November [apparently subsequently postponed until 4 December], ende voorder oock de biletten tot vercoopen van de goederen, met de caracke [gecommen].' Also mentioned in Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 173: 'Ghesien de ghedruckte billetten rakende de vercoopinghe van de goederen, uyte crake ghecomen, is gheordonneert die te seynden aen den collegien van den admiraliteyten tot Amstelredam ende Hoorn, mitsgaders aen de commisen in Hollant, om die in de omliggende provintien ende steden in diligentie ghesonden ende uytghestelt te worden om eenen yeghelicken van den voorcr. vercoopinghe te adverteren.'

wrought in silver, a fine bezoar stone, and two ounces of amber'.⁷¹ In November, Maurits's half-brother Frederick Hendrik, up and coming military and political figure and future stadtholder, was given 'from the goods coming from the carrack[,] a pavilion with its hangings, one ounce of ambergris, two *balekens* of musk, and a bezoar stone'.⁷² In addition to the gifts for statesmen of the highest rank, the VOC merchants presented packets to the city of Middelburg, to at least sixteen local functionaries, and to the captains of the ships. These packets all contained porcelain—either little dishes or bowls.⁷³ The translation of goods into gifts proved to be an effective ploy on the part of the VOC: One year after the ships returned to Zeeland and Carletti initiated the suit, on 12 August 1603, the Admiralty of Middelburg ('court of the sea') found in favour of the merchants, declaring 'the goods of the aforesaid defendant condemned and confiscated for the benefit of the common cause and of those who have the right after paying the costs'.⁷⁴ Mediation begat mediation: Goods purchased by Carletti were converted by way of capture into the currency of booty and, subsequently, translated into gifts and commodities.

The porcelain parcelled out in the fall of 1602 to the city of Middelburg (twenty-eight packets of little dishes; fourteen of small bowls); the bailiff, steward, tollmaster (two packets each); the burgomasters of Vlissingen (unspecified number of packets); the governor of Vlissingen (some of the largest pieces, with others from the warehouses); and others was an unprecedented gift—or bribe. Two months later, in December, it was resolved that 'the bed [*ledicant*] for the Duke of Florence [The Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando I de' Medici] would be sent via diplomatic channels to the King of France for him to see it, and thence to the Grand Duke. The porcupine [*porcos spino*] belonging to the Italian, and the rhinoceros horn cup [...] were also to be sent to the king'.⁷⁵ Some of the very curiosities Carletti transported for the Medici ruler of

71 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 189: (7 October 1602) 'Voor Sijn Excellentie de naervolgende: het goud gevest met zijn toebehooren, een pauwellioen met de stoffage, een pauw, een schoon pedro besaer, 2 oncen ambers.' In April 1603 these items were valued—the pavilion and its hangings at £ 450 and the peacock, wrought in silver, together with the Seychelles nut, at £ 75. See Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 197.

72 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 192. On bezoar stones and their value in early modern markets, see Borschberg P. "The Euro-Asian Trade in Bezoar Stones (approx. 1500 to 1700)", in North M., *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia, 1400–1900* (Surrey – Burlington, VT: 2010) 29–44.

73 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 189–190.

74 Carletti, *My Voyage* 250; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 206.

75 Unger, *Oudste Reizen* 201. The *porcos spino* may refer to a bezoar stone, as these precious medicinal stones were found in porcupines among other animals.

Tuscany were being presented by the VOC to the King of France.⁷⁶ In the meantime, Carletti was being held accountable for the salary of the judges, who, he claimed, ‘tried—and always kept on trying—to do everything possible to prolong the trial’.⁷⁷ According to Carletti, the bed and other curiosities the VOC documented sending to the Grand Duke by way of diplomatic channels via the French court were sent to the Queen of France—in lieu, he writes, of providing ‘that which she justly asked in my favour and benefit’ when she wrote letters of support.⁷⁸ In other words, his request for her mediation was contravened by the mediation of diplomatic gifts on the part of the VOC. Carletti reports in his *Chronicles*, addressed to the Grand Duke, that the Queen of France rejected the gift: ‘she did not want to accept it, not wanting to prejudice my cause’.⁷⁹ While the VOC may have thought it a clever move to gift a bed intended for one Medici to another, the Queen of France was clearly on to the fact that the gift was presented at Carletti’s expense. Later in the final *Chronicle*, Carletti describes what he experienced as a breakthrough after several years, when the Grand Duke apparently threatened to commandeer goods from Dutch ships in Leghorn (Livorno) equivalent to the value of what Carletti sought to recuperate in Zeeland. Even this, though, had little effect ultimately and he writes of finding himself ‘with an empty purse and one bag full of patience and another full of documents’ to show for his efforts.⁸⁰ Ultimately he was awarded 13,000 florins, some of which he was then forced to spend on a meal for the lawyers and judges. Carletti made his way home to his native Florence in 1606, and there composed his *Chronicles*.

In the last, pathetic passages of the final *Chronicle*, Carletti describes his feelings on having lost his worldly goods: ‘it is enough to break one’s heart’, he writes, emphasizing too the estrangement he felt in a foreign country.⁸¹ He goes on at some length, bemoaning the vicissitudes of fortune. Carletti and his goods were incidental casualties in a politically fraught trade encounter of the pirating kind. He, his life story, and his *Chronicles* are unique—but the plotline involving Dutch capture of Portuguese (and Spanish, in the West

76 See Karl, “Galanterie di cose rare . . .” 28.

77 Carletti, *My Voyage* 252; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 207.

78 Carletti, *My Voyage* 252; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 207.

79 Carletti, *My Voyage* 252; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 207. Translation is mine ([...] gli mandorno a donare quel letto et l’altre curiosità che portavo per V.A.S., sí come ho detto in altro luogo di questi mia discorsi, et che lei non volse accettare da quelli, quando glie ne offersero, per non fare pregiudito alla mia causa.).

80 Carletti, *My Voyage* 257; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 210.

81 Carletti, *My Voyage* 258; Carletti, *Ragionamenti* 211.

Indies) ships and goods is far from exceptional for this time. Indeed, it has been estimated that ‘during the period of the first charter (1602–1623) the VOC looted between 150 and 200 Portuguese ships, with a value of roughly ten million guilders. Without the income of this so-called “free commerce” the VOC would have gone bankrupt’.⁸² In his landmark study of *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company* (1954) T. Volker pointed out that, prior to 1602, ‘only a few specimens of porcelain had reached Holland via Portugal and Spain’ and that it was in that year that for ‘the first time the Dutch public saw porcelain in appreciable quantities’—thanks to the arrival of the goods from the *San Iago*.⁸³ The subsequent significant shipment of porcelain to the United Provinces arrived in Amsterdam two years later in 1604: This was booty from the Portuguese ship the *Santa Catarina*, seized by the Dutch naval hero Jacob van Heemskerck. As a result of the seizure of that one Portuguese carrack, approximately 60,000 kilos or up to 100,000 pieces of porcelain are estimated to have entered the Dutch market in 1604. The arrival in both 1602 and 1604 of huge amounts of exotic goods—porcelain, raw and woven silks, pepper, musk and ambergris, gold, furniture—made national and international news at the time. From our perspective it is now clear that these hyper-mediated goods and their arrival in European ports on Dutch ships signalled the dawn of a new era—one marked by the complex, global entanglements traced by ships, castles of the sea, vessels of mediation.

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